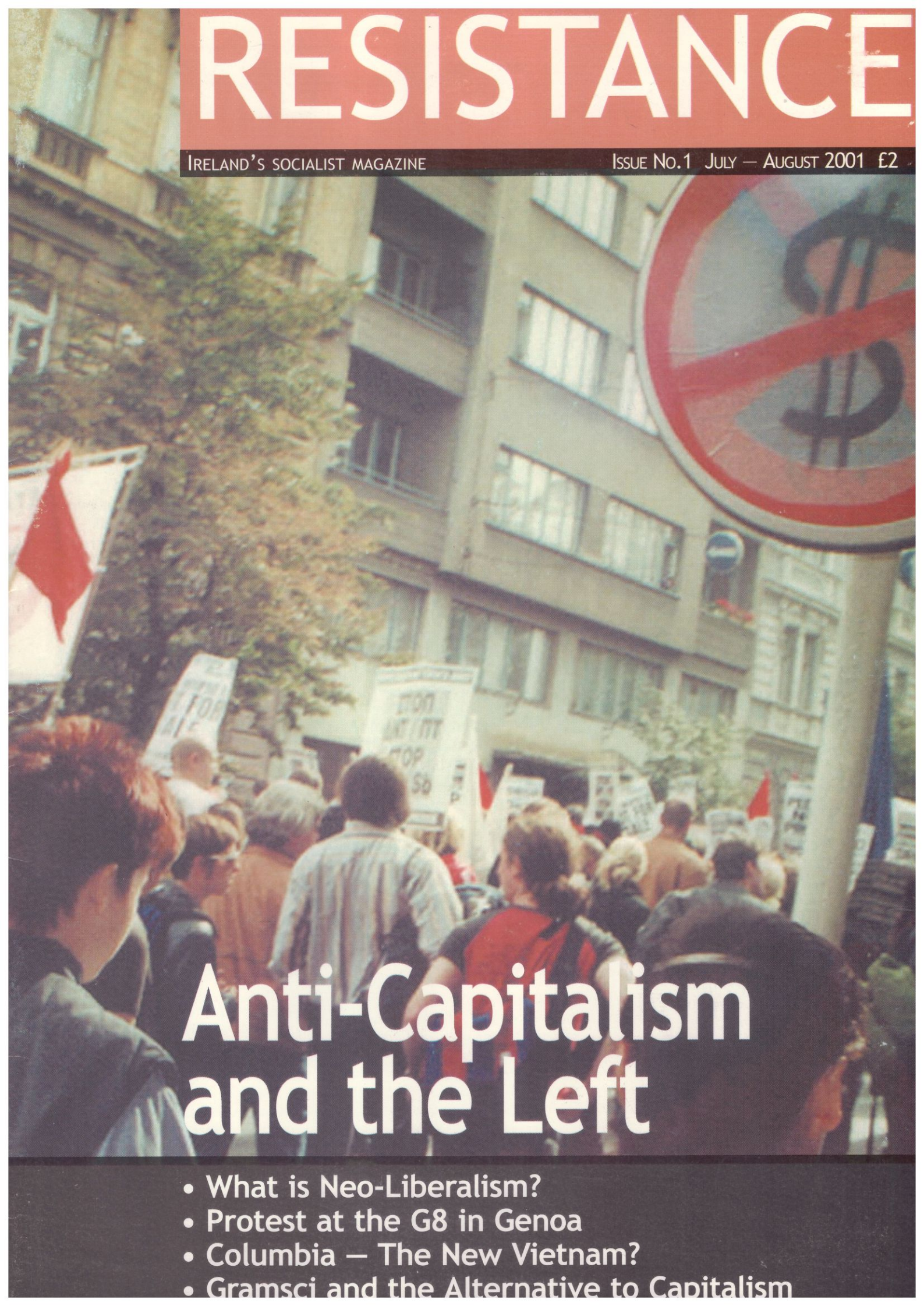


RESISTANCE

IRELAND'S SOCIALIST MAGAZINE

Issue No.1 JULY — AUGUST 2001 £2



Anti-Capitalism and the Left

- What is Neo-Liberalism?
- Protest at the G8 in Genoa
- Columbia — The New Vietnam?
- Gramsci and the Alternative to Capitalism

RESISTANCE

IRELAND'S SOCIALIST MAGAZINE

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Verso No-Nonsense Guides, Tony Cliff, and Dirty War, Clean Hands

This is a very good time to launch a magazine called *Resistance*. When a ruling party loses a vote that was of its own making something is afoot.

The anti Nice vote — against the recommendation of every major political party, ICTU, the Bishops and IBEC — has given a glimpse of the extent of the anger and frustration in the Celtic Tiger.

Opposition to militarisation and to a big business Europe were the issues. What was already predominantly a left-wing vote was made more so by the response it got, which only served to further highlight the sham of what passes for democracy in today's Europe. "No" voters were dismissed by the Government and then courted by the unelected President of the EU Commission, both blatantly telling us to go back and give them the right answer next year.

This mood is connected to the growing anti-capitalist movement worldwide. The significance of this movement is that for the first time since the sixties, the system itself is being identified as the problem. It started in Seattle in 99 with protests against the massive and obscene profits of corporate America but, following the French revolt at Millau last year, it has well and truly spread across Europe.

The vicious reaction that protesters in Gothenburg got from the Swedish state dispelled the myth that there was a nicer model of capitalism.

The big business interests laid bare at Nice and the inhuman racism of Fortress Europe has made Europe seem a very ugly

place. These sentiments are a long way from the visions of a progressive Europe that used to dominate the left. In response to this, a new radical movement has emerged with its own slogans, its own language and its own global character.

However, it is undeniable that where the anti-capitalist movement is strongest, it has taken root in more local struggles and workplaces.

In France, anti-capitalism has changed the whole political and intellectual climate. Opposition to the system has been strengthened by inspirational fights against privatisation and more recently against job losses such as those at Danone and Marks and Spencer.

This magazine seeks to draw the connections between the wider anti-capitalist movement and struggles on the ground.

Some 97% of Dubliners have refused to pay their bin charges. Over the last few months, we have seen strikes in schools, on the trains, and at the Airport. Linking these struggles with the anti-capitalist movement is the challenge for those interested in a better world.

Kevin Danaher, one of the spokespeople for the movement in the US has talked of the creative diversity of the movement but also the need to link up the dots. Through debate and discussion *Resistance* hopes, as part of the movement and a voice in the movement, to contribute to that process.

RESISTANCE is the bi-monthly magazine of the Socialist Workers Party (Ireland)

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Subscription: one year
UK & Ireland £10
Europe £14 elsewhere: £16
Printed by Magee Printers

NORTHERN IRELAND

Sectarianism on the march

Many people will have been shocked at television pictures of Catholic school children from the Ardoyne area of North Belfast being prevented from attending their local primary school.

A Catholic father, leaving his daughter to the Holy Cross Primary School, was attacked by a group of men who were erecting loyalist flags. Following this there was a stand off lasting several days, in which loyalists prevented Catholic parents from accompanying their children to school.

There were also several nights of rioting in which blast-bomb attacks took place on Catholic homes and five Protestant families fled the area.

Tension in the area has been on the increase for several weeks in the run up to the "Tour of the North" Orange parade which takes place every two years on the 19th of June. Sectarian violence happens every year the tour is organised. It is a deliberately provocative gesture. As one Orangeman responsible for organising the parade said a couple of years ago "There would be no point

marching unless it went through Catholic areas".

Given the level of religious segregation in North Belfast, sectarian violence often takes the form of attacks on schools. Paisley's DUP can only have reinforced the view that Catholic schools are targets when it led protests of Protestant children to Catholic schools when Martin McGuinness became Minister for Education.

The ongoing feud between the UDA/LVF and the UVF has played its part in the escalation of sectarianism, as each organisation tries to outdo the other in the bigotry stakes. The DUP, on foot of their electoral successes, have also ratcheted up the sectarian tension.

Newly elected MP for North Belfast, Nigel Dodds, announced on the night of the election that he would "march in Portadown". The UUP, often presented as moderate unionism, is no better. The UUP and Trimble's posturing about resignation has also heightened tensions. There is



a real danger that Garvaghy Road will become a bargaining point between the British and Trimble- if they let the march down Trimble will stay.

Ordinary people endure the worst of sectarianism while the players in the peace process feed into the tension by seeing things exclusively in terms of two communities. Poverty is a huge issue in North Belfast but even though Sinn Féin and the PUP have put themselves forward as mediators in this dispute,

they will not unite the two communities to fight for jobs, better pay and more resources for the area.

Across the whole of Northern Ireland, workers on both sides of the sectarian divide are suffering the attacks from New Labour and the NI Executive. The success of the newly formed Socialist Environmental Alliance shows the potential for building a class based alternative to sectarianism.

ASYLUM SEEKERS — THE RACE CARD

Minister for Justice John O'Donoghue has claimed that 90% of asylum seeker cases are bogus. 93% of those seeking asylum in Ireland are refused.

These two facts tell you about the asylum seeker process in Ireland. It treats asylum seekers as criminals and it is racist.

Despite the fact that the economy needs an extra 300,000 workers, asylum seekers here are not given the right to work.

Mary Harney has called for a relaxing of restrictions on the right to work for asylum seekers. It amounts to a cynical exercise looking to exploit asylum seekers as a new poorly paid workforce. The right to work

should be given, combined with the right to decent pay and conditions.

The reality is far from the case. The government introduced visas for Filipino nurses which mark a return to a type of indentured labour. Recruitment agencies make deductions from the wages of these nurses and the government turns a blind eye. Their work permits often tie workers to the one employer.

Brazilian workers in Hannon's poultry factory in Roscommon were forced to stay in company owned accommodation at exorbitant rents. This was of course deducted at source from their wage packets. To ensure sure that they don't outstay their welcome, their

flight home to Brazil is deducted directly from their wages.

1616 deportation orders have been signed this year. While the government spoke of welcoming an enlarged EU for the benefit of Eastern Europeans they deported 700 Romanians.

Many asylum seekers are simply not let in — over 5000 were turned away last year. Immigration officers at the airport are openly racist, recently picking on a Nigerian doctor and locking him up when he arrived. Detention is becoming an automatic part of seeking asylum in Ireland.

Esther Osinuga, a Nigerian woman, and her sixteen year old daughter Tamie, represent the



The recent Stop Deportations march.

racist injustice of the system. O'Donoghue, when asked about her case could not remember it, he signs so many. Tamie has been given a deportation order despite her age and the fact that she is awaiting a hip operation at Tallaght hospital.

The Stop Deportations Campaign demon-

stration in Dublin showed that support for an amnesty for all asylum seekers is growing. A first step towards that is making sure that Esther and Tamie stay here. Support their campaign by contacting: stop.deportations@ireland.com

ITALY

Workers can break Berlusconi

The election last month of a right-wing coalition in the Italian General Elections, headed by media tycoon Silvio Berlusconi, was a severe blow to the left although not altogether unexpected. The centre-left coalition that governed Italy for five years got just 38% of the popular vote.

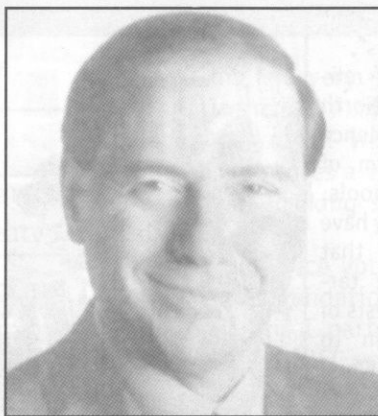
Italy has returned to what will be a modern-Thatcherite rule. While Berlusconi encapsulates ignorance at the highest level the danger posed by him should not be underestimated.

Berlusconi is Italy's richest businessman, worth an estimated \$14 billion and in control of all six major television channels. He is tied into allowing a free hand for companies and opposes even the most basic of workers' rights. More worryingly his coalition partners include the fascist Alleanza Nazionale (AN), led by Gianfranco Fini, which has about 15 per cent support.

The AN is a split from the more hard-line Nazi Movimento Sociale Italiano (MSI) and has successfully won the ideological battle to appear 'respectable', hiding some of its thugish elements.

This very much followed the pattern first started by the Front National in France under the control of Jean-Marie Le Pen.

Another partner is Bossi's Northern League, a racist movement whose aim is to divide Italy, ditching the poorer and more agricultural south. The NL vote fell from 10% to 3.9% but the party has already begun to call for tougher measures against illegal immigrants. Berlusconi's cabinet includes three Northern League and five AN ministers. Fini is deputy Prime Minister.



Protests wiped the smile off Berlusconi's face in 1994

April until December 1994 having built his support on the back of the Tangentopoli, or corruption scandals, that rocked the political establishment. During that period Berlusconi attempted to install his own lawyer, Previti, as Minister for Justice, a classic case of jobs for the boys and of running the country as his own personal business. Two massive demonstrations effectively toppled his government.

The left-wing Rifondazione Comunista was the only left wing party not to lose support at the polls, while the main centre-left party the Social Democrats (DS) fared disastrously. They are still reeling from the result and presently have no leader since Veltroni took over as Mayor of Rome. Interestingly though, the centre-left coalition, of which DS formed the major part, gained ground. Known as the Margherita, it's front man is the charismatic former Mayor of Rome and Green member, Rutelli. Two days after the result, steelworkers demonstrated for the first time in many years under the banner of the left-wing CGIL trade union.

Of course this is not the first time Berlusconi has led the country. If it's true that capitalists only ever want one thing ☐ and that's everything, then Berlusconi is no exception. He headed the country from

Rarely a day goes by where the issue of the G8 summit in Genoa is not on the news.

This will be Berlusconi's first 'international' debut and he has already committed 14,000 armed soldiers, backed up by armed police, to ensure his fellow capitalists can meet. The anti-G8 protest has a strong anti-Berlusconi element, fighting his vision of massive privatisation and public spending cutbacks. The coordination group mobilising for Genoa has clearly stated that any violence encountered on the demonstration will be the result of forces of 'law and order'.

Italian opposition to the intervention in Serbia during the Kosovan war was strong, as were other anti-capitalist demonstrations such as those against the OECD meeting in Bologna last year.

Before the election Berlusconi posted every family a copy of his autobiography, complete with an endearing piece at the end written by his mother.

However Italy's most popular book in the run up to the election was *The Smell of Money* ☐ *The Origins and Mystery of Silvio Berlusconi's Wealth*.

Time will tell who fills the vacuum on the left but what is needed in the short term is a strong, organised workers presence in the upcoming anti-capitalist demonstrations.

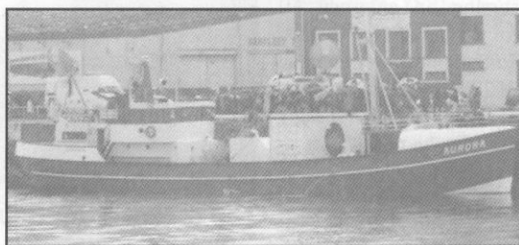
What better place to start than Genoa, where workers, angry at cutbacks and attacks on their rights, can add industrial muscle to the tens of thousands of environmentalists, socialists and community activists all fighting our common enemy ☐ capitalism.

— **Donnacha MacRaghnaill**

WOMEN ON WAVES

The arrival of the Women on Waves ship to Ireland has put abortion back on the political agenda. Ireland has one of the most draconian abortion laws in the world. At least 6,300 women travel to Britain every year to obtain abortion services that are unavailable to them here.

Women on Waves (WOW) was set up in 1999 by a Dutch physician, Dr. Rebecca Gomperts, who built a reproductive health care clinic that is portable enough to be placed on a ship and travel to provide medical and surgical abortions to women in



The Women on Waves ship in Dublin

countries where it is illegal.

By taking the ship into international waters, abortions can be performed legally and safely.

The arrival of the WOW ship has highlighted how hypocritical the solution of exporting

Irish abortion to Britain is.

WOW received close to 300 phone calls from women faced with crisis pregnancy. Because of the sheer number of women who requested a termination from us, and legal complications that arose in the Netherlands,

we were unable to offer women abortions on the ship.

Abortion has always been a class issue in Ireland, with the most vulnerable and marginalised women in society denied access.

The reason so many women came to us was quite simply because they could not afford £500/600 to travel to Britain.

The massive demonstrations during the X Case in 1992 forced the courts to allow abortion in cases of suicide, but successive governments have failed to introduce legislation because of

sheer political cowardice.

However, the fact that the WOW ship was not bombarded by anti-choice activists represents an important shift in Irish society.

The majority of people in Ireland recognise that abortion is a reality. Since 1967 over 100,000 Irish women have gone to Britain. These women are our mothers, our wives, our sisters, our friends, our grandmothers, and their voices can no longer be ignored.

— **SINEAD KENNEDY**

On behalf of Women on Waves Ireland

NICE TREATY

The Irish establishment were stunned by the unexpected rejection of the Nice Treaty. Within a week of the vote confusion reigned, with Finance Minister Charlie McCreevy announcing at the besieged conference of EU leaders in Gothenburg that the rejection of the treaty had been a "healthy expression of anti-establishment feeling".

Frustration and anger at the growing gap between rich and poor and the crisis in public services led to a serious defeat for the Irish ruling class. The No campaign tapped into a mood of anger that concerned the issues of militarism, the lack of democracy in the EU, the sell off of public services and the arrogance of the government.

The Treaty was voted down despite attempts to confuse and bully the electorate into voting yes. That the vote was a revolt against the trade union bureaucracy, Liberal Ireland's opinion makers and the pro-market agenda of the government and the opposition parties is clearly demonstrated by the election statistics.

Turnout was highest in urban areas with high concentrations of workers.

Many union branches, against the advice of the ICTU, recommended voting no to their members. The progressive No campaign, including socialists, republicans and others was concentrated in working class areas. These areas recorded the highest no vote.

A majority of traditional Labour voters rejected the Treaty. Clearly too, Sinn Fein tapped into the mood of anger. The North Kerry 60% no vote is an indication of this. The only two constituencies to narrowly accept the treaty, Dublin South and Dun Laoghaire, have deep poverty and dozens of under-serviced housing estates, along with a good few leafy suburbs.

It is important to oppose any attempt by the government to overturn the no vote. The unspoken agenda of Nice is the restructuring of the European Union to copperfasten the power of the big states and the multinationals. No amount of protocols will change that.

The Nice referendum is a watershed for the Irish Left. It proves that there is a large audience for anti-establishment politics. Electorally, the main beneficiaries of this will be Sinn Fein and the Greens, both of whom have indicated their willingness to go into coalition governments with the right.

But the neoliberal agenda, encapsulated in the Treaty's provisions for "unanimity of liberalisation", can only be defeated by workers taking action against the way it affects them.

If the spirit and politics of anti-capitalism can be carried into the workplaces and housing estates, the no vote will indeed be a turning point.

CLIMATE CHANGE-fact file

★ Global warming is one of the greatest threats facing our planet. According to the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS), "the climatic changes caused by global warming will have severe impacts including a rise in sea level, more heat waves and droughts, more extreme weather events, producing floods and property destruction; and tropical diseases spreading to areas where they have never been known before" (UCS website www.ucsusa.org)

★ Ten of the warmest years on record have been in the last 15 years. Most scientists predict that unless drastic action is taken the speed of global warming will accelerate.

★ By far the biggest culprit in global warming is also the world's biggest capitalist power, the US. It accounts for 25% of all global carbon dioxide emissions. Europe comes next with about 20%.

★ The response by the world's governments to the crisis of global warming has been completely inadequate. The Kyoto protocol committed them to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 5% below 1992 levels before 2012. Yet even this tiny reform will never be achieved. George Bush Jnr. has objected and the US will not be abiding by these terms.

★ Car, oil and oil processing are central to modern capitalism. One study revealed that 7 of the 12 biggest corporations in the western part of Germany are "car society" corporations. France and Britain are in a similar situation. Fossil fuel companies have created a world locked into reliance on its products.

★ A 1974 a US Senate report revealed how a corporate alliance literally destroyed electric rail, tram and bus transport systems in 45 cities in order to force people onto the roads in cars. It challenges the idea that the dominance of fossil fuel is a consumer choice issue.

★ The fossil fuel giants exert a huge amount of influence on Western governments. The Clinton-Gore White House received at least \$12 billion in election contributions from fossil fuel corporations.

★ George Bush Jnr. followed his father into the oil business and has been promoting its interests since taking office. He and Dick Cheney took \$47 million from energy companies for their election campaign.

★ Bush has torn up the Kyoto agreement, rejected new standards limiting the amount of arsenic in drinking water and allowed mining companies to ignore fines imposed for environmental damage.

★ Friends of the oil industry occupy key positions in the Bush administration. They include Gale Norton, Interior Secretary, who made a name for herself defending corporate polluters and who currently promotes oil drilling in Alaska's National Wildlife Reserve. National Security adviser, Condoleezza Rice, is a former director of Chevron Oil.

★ In 1994 BP rebranded in a cynical recognition of growing environmental concerns. Despite a new green logo and talk of being beyond petroleum, it is the biggest seller of petrol today. It spent more on developing its new image than on research in renewable energy last year.

★ There is an alternative. Wind, gas and wave power are all environmentally safe methods for generating power. Currently, and before any large-scale research has been done into more effective and efficient ways of harnessing these energy sources, wind power can generate electricity at about 2.9p per kilowatt hour, compared to 2p for gas generated. Wave power would cost about 4p and solar power 7p. (Source: British Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution) Investment in public transport and the provision of a free and efficient service would drastically reduce the level of carbon dioxide emissions.



Anti-Capitalism and the Left

Kieran Allen looks at the birth of a new movement and at the debates around it in Ireland and elsewhere.



'The singular achievement of the anti-capitalist movement has been to once again name 'the system' as the source of our problems. It has created a language that unites, in common cause, the US steel-worker with sweatshop workers from GAP in Saipan.'

The anti-capitalist movement is getting larger and more militant. In Quebec in April there were 50,000 demonstrators with a large contingent from organised labour. In Gothenburg, the EU became the focus of opposition showing that few in the movement are taken in by the idea of a more 'progressive' European model of capitalism. In Genoa in July, there will be around 100,000 many of them again trade unionists.

When the movement began first, there was an emphasis on 'respect for diversity of tactics'. This often translated into different colour codes to indicate varying degrees of commitment to direct action. Now according to the radical journalist L.A. Kauffman, there is 'a reluctance to draw lines between 'good' and 'bad' protesters, and a recognition that the overwhelming majority of violence has come from the police.'

In Gothenburg, the police revealed the naked violence that lies just under the surface when they shot three protesters with live rounds. In Quebec, the police fired nearly 5,000 CS canisters of tear gas and built a three mile long perimeter fence around the summit meeting of the Free Trade Area of the Americas. Their tactic was to use maximum force against militants and to scare off more moderate elements. It backfired completely.

Naomi Klein summed up the result, "Tear gas was supposed to break down the protesters, but it had the opposite effect: It enraged and radicalised them enough to cheer for Black Blockers who dared to throw back the canisters. It may be light and atomised enough to ride on air, but I suspect that the coming months will show that gas has powerful bonding properties."

The anti-capitalist movement represents a qualitative breakthrough. Before Seattle, protest movements usually focussed on single issues. They took place against an intellectual background, which implied there could be no societal change. Journals like New Left Review, for example, argued that there could only be moves to a more tolerant civil society based on the market. Identity politics dominated campuses in North America and there was a wider orthodoxy, which dismissed Western workers as patriarchal exploiters of women, gays and the Third World. Environmental politics was increasingly being pulled towards the establishment, as was demonstrated in the political transformation of the German Green, Joschka Fischer, from a street fighter in the early eighties to a proponent of NATO bombing.

The singular achievement of the anti-capitalist movement has been to once again name 'the system' as the source of our problems. It has created a language that unites, in common cause, the US steel-worker with sweatshop workers from GAP in Saipan. It has challenged the TINA myth of Thatcherism - the message that There Is No

Alternative and that 'globalisation' is like some reified system in which we are reluctantly but inescapably trapped.

In all of this, the movement has been compared to the protest decade of the sixties. But there are also important differences, which indicate that the anti-capitalist movement of today represents a far greater potential threat to the privileged.

In the sixties, there were large reformist and Stalinist parties which had a considerable base and credibility among working class militants. The general strike in France in 1968 contained a revolutionary dynamic in which workers had begun to seize their factories. But the major block was the French Communist Party. It had won a mass base during the French resistance and had a layer of working class supporters who could be mobilised to physically prevent radicalised students and youth entering many factories. The French CP used its influence to derail the whole movement into settling for a major pay rise rather than embarking on a strategy to bring down the Gaullist government. As its Secretary General, Waldeck Rochet, put it, 'The French Communist Party conducted itself as a responsible party.'

Today, Stalinism has virtually disappeared. There is a process of recomposition underway as key sections of the labour movement look for an alternative to Labour Parties. There does not exist the same type of mass reformist party which was able to stymie the 'anti-capitalists' of the sixties.

This is not to imply that the anti-capitalist movement has an open field. There is still a tight labour bureaucracy in Ireland which is wedded to social partnership. The difference is that this bureaucracy has not got the same credibility that has been won from past struggles. It is close to the political establishment and its methods encourage passivity among the mass of workers while providing patronage for a tiny minority of activists. When the ICTU and the SIPTU leadership called for a Yes vote on Nice, they were brushed aside by their rank and file, precisely because they do not have credibility that has been won from struggle.

The movement in the sixties also took place against the background of a long post-war boom, the Golden Age of capitalism. This had an important impact on both its character and the manner in which the system responded. In the US, for example, working class involvement in the movement was fairly minimal. Many students looked to Herbert Marcuse who argued that workers had become 'embourgeoised' and the hope for liberation lay in less developed countries. Just how wrong Marcuse was was shown in the French General Strike of 1968.

Today the anti-capitalist movement emerges while capitalism is far more unstable. Bursts of economic growth are far shallower and precarious.

Even when there is a boom - as occurred in the US or in Ireland in the 1990s - it does not lead to significant improvements in workers' lives. In the Celtic Tiger, there has been a redistribution of wealth to the privileged while large numbers are confined to low paid jobs. In the US, the majority of workers have suffered what one economist called a 'silent depression', as hourly wages peaked in 1973 and declined ever since then until the late nineties, with every major wage settlement less than the preceding year.

This means that the gap between the anti-capitalist movement and the wider working class is potentially far narrower. In the sixties in the US, working class involvement in the anti-Vietnam protests was minimal.

However, in Seattle the AFL-CIO — the major union in the US — was represented in large numbers even if its leadership wanted to maintain a separate contingent from younger, more militant anti-capitalists. Internationally, the labour movement is still going through a period of recovery following major defeats.

There are some signs that independent rank and file militancy is making a return but we are still only at the start of this process. The challenge for the anti-capitalist movement is to link its general concerns against globalisation to this rank and file militancy. The French employers organisation recently expressed a fear that the anti-globalisation movement will find an echo in the workplaces and the offices. We have to ensure their fear comes true.

The Left

How has the left responded to the anti-capitalist movement? One response has come from the Labour Party and the trade union leadership who have attempted to identify with some of the concerns about 'unregulated capitalism'. Des Geraghty, the SIPTU leader, has written a short pamphlet which is strong on a rhetorical attack on 'jungle capitalism' while his close political ally, Pronsias de Rossa has described the movement as a 'backlash by people who see themselves as excluded and note the absence from the mainstream political agenda of the issues that concern them'.

But this superficial sympathy hides a deeper antipathy to a set of politics that places mass direct action centre stage. Anything that is not channelled through parliamentary institutions is seen as dangerous, populist and even slightly right-wing. De Rossa has equated the anti-capitalist movement with 'shareholder activism' and the British fuel protests. He claims that the protests 'spring from shared general disillusionment, rather than specific concerns or preferred solutions'. His party leader, Ruairi Quinn has even argued that the Internet 'facilitated the kind of violent political action we've seen in recent times, at Seattle and Quebec...'

Labour politicians promise a return to regulated capitalism so that sections of the movement can be reincorporated into the system just as occurred with some of the '68 generation. But Labour has played an important role in paving the way for the type of gung-ho 'jungle capitalism' which they rhetorically condemn. They



Anti-capitalists don't mince their words...

backed the Nice Treaty even though Article 133 of that treaty called for 'uniformity in measures of liberalisation'.

They support social partnership even though it has facilitated a transfer of wealth to the privileged, a run down of the public services and privatisation. The Heritage Foundation, one of the foremost right wing think tanks in

the US, has described the Celtic Tiger as the second most deregulated economy in the world - and that is after 14 years of social partnership!

Another mistaken response to the anti-capitalist movement has come from sections of the far left. Groupings such as Lutte Ouvriere, one of the largest Trotskyist organisations in France, have denounced the movement for effectively being 'protectionist' and seeking reactionary solutions.

This response is similar to what occurred in the 1960s where there were some 'far left' groups which emerged from a long period of isolation only to adopt a hostile view of the protest movement. Marx defined this type of phenomenon as political sectarianism. He noted that 'the sect sees the justification for its existence and its point of honour not in what it has in common with the class movement but in the particular shibboleth which distinguishes itself from the movement.' He also wrote that 'the development of socialist sectarianism and that of the real working class movement always stand in reverse ratio to one another'.

In Ireland, the Socialist Party demonstrates elements of this response. The SP has made a recent shift to tacking on an emphasis on 'the programme' to community type politics geared to electioneering. Orthodox Trotskyists have long believed that there are 'transitional demands', which have a semi magical quality, so that once they are fought for by the labour movement, workers can pass over the bridge from capitalism to socialism. Any movement which does not rise to these demands and does not subscribe to 'the programme', can be labelled 'reformist'. So the SP issued a leaflet on the Globalise Resistance demonstration outside Dublin's Stock Exchange attacking the call to 'tax the rich'.

This approach fails to see how real revolutionary movements emerge without any regard to preset programmes. Ultimately it is not a political party which liberates workers but rather a party has to both learn from, and argue with workers so that workers free themselves.

The most serious challenge to capitalism came in Russia in 1917 when workers and peasants fought the simplest 'reformist' demands of 'land, peace and bread'. Conversely the purest adherence to 'transitional demands' can often hide a propagandist approach which disdains mass direct action, looks to the police as 'workers in uniform' and measures everything in terms of getting the next TD elected.

The real challenge for revolutionaries is to embrace the anti-capitalist movement enthusiastically and to get on a learning curve where they identify with its spirit and aspirations. This means recognising that when there is 'a sudden turn in history', there is often, ironically, a temptation for revolutionaries to retreat into older habits and forms of organisation.

The anti-capitalist movement today

The anti-capitalist movement is a direct response to the changes that have occurred in late capitalism. Its 'thought leaders' such as Susan George, Vandana Shiva and Walden Bello have torn apart the neoliberal Washington consensus and produced a searing critique of a system which puts profit before people. The movement has helped to delegitimise the three main institutional pillars of global capitalism - the World Trade Organisation (WTO), the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. Its activist core has won broad public support for some of its specific concerns. A recent survey in the US showed that 70 percent of the population believe that multinationals have too much power. The fact that the last meeting of the WTO took place in Qatar is ample proof of the 'crisis of legitimacy' that now surrounds these institutions.

The question now is where does the movement go from here? One thing to be avoided is what Bello calls 'the soft corporate counter-offensive' being mounted by our rulers. This seeks to persuade Non-Governmental Organisations to incorporate a 'social clause' in future trade negotiations. This is merely gesture politics by the global elite designed to regain some legitimacy. Even if labour or environmental clauses were added in a new round of trade negotiations, they do not alter the fundamental direction of 'global capitalism' which is to commodify every aspect of life and to open up all public services to private competition.

Even if the movement can avoid incorporation, the question which still remains is what alternative does it pose to the present style of globalisation?

One approach might be broadly characterised as 'the politics of return'. This seeks to move from a globalised economy back to a more regulated form of capitalism. So Bello proposes a form of 'deglobalization' where there is a 'more pluralistic system of economic governance' with more activist states and revitalised regional trading blocks such as ASEAN in South East Asia. The French sociologist Bourdieu places more emphasis on the power of the state: 'national or, better still, supranational, in other words a European state (as a stage on the way to a world state) that is capable of effectively controlling and taxing profits made on financial markets'.

This assumes that globalisation occurred accidentally, solely because of the success of the neoliberal networks which dominate the IMF or the WTO. However there are deeper reasons why we have entered the present stage of capitalism. In reality, the global transnationals of today grew out of the national markets because the logic of capitalism is for one company to cannibalise another. There is a dialectical relationship between the independent 'free' capitalists of yesteryear and the giant monopolies or duopolies of today. Far from modifying this process, the state apparatus in every capitalist country promotes companies which outgrow their national frontiers in order to be 'more competitive'. Renault

or Goodman's food group have become large and threatening precisely because the respective French and Irish states followed the logic of the system and subsidised them. Hoping that localised states can control global companies now is like asking the inventor to put Frankenstein back in his box.

The neo-liberal agenda also arose because capitalism entered a series of economic crises after 1973 when there was a broad tendency for the rate of profit in manufacturing to fall. One

**Chaos in the
Stockmarket.
Another way
is needed**



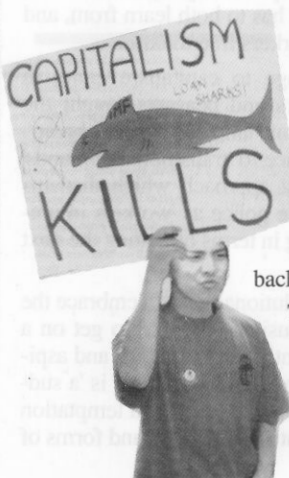
response was greater emphasis on financial speculation. Another was a concerted attempt to shift resources back to the privileged so that they could reinvigorate their economies. Hence the attacks on the welfare state, the continual pressure for 'flexible' labour markets and the stress on removing any form of 'down-time' in work. Contrary to conventional economics, the boom slump cycle and the tendency for the rate of profit to fall are intrinsic to the system. Far from a Golden Age of capitalism being the norm, it was very much the exception and was dependent on a particular set of factors associated with a permanent arms economy. A return to greater control by the nation state would therefore not lead to a reduction of pressure on workers. It might even lead to further attempts to increase the rate of exploitation.

Finally, there is a tension at the heart of Bourdieu's and Bello's approach. They have been courageous in supporting the mass direct action which has closed down meetings of the World Bank and the WTO. They have also argued clearly against attempts to reincorporate the movement into the dominant consensus. Their alternatives however resemble old style socialism, or rather social regulation, from above. Instead of relying on the self activity of workers and anti-capitalists, there can be a subtle shift to lobbying the powerful. In the case of Bello, he contemplates tactical alliances with right wing US protectionists to undermine the WTO, the IMF and the World Bank.

None of this is to argue, by the way, that anti-capitalists should not make demands on the state. We should demand more spending on public services but this will mean confrontation with the political and economic elite who are united on a long term strategy of increasing the rate of exploitation and reducing 'the social wage'. Even winning the most moderate reform such as the Tobin tax will require an immense increase in militancy from below and if such militancy is required the obvious question is, "why settle for so little?"

In France in December 1995, a magnificent general strike occurred which scuppered some of the plans to reduce social security. This strike united train drivers, teachers and postal workers. In some local areas 'general assemblies' of workers emerged where the rank and file discussed how to take on the government. Such rudimentary forms of organisation are highly effective in coordinating militant action against the system because they are free, open, and embody a form of democracy that is normally absent within capitalism. But in a more developed form they represent at one and the same time not only a powerful opposition to the system but also the seeds of a different way of reorganising society. In brief, they contain the possibility of an 'economic democracy' to which the anti-capitalist movement aspires.

Rosa Luxemburg argued that 'revolutionaries are the best fighters for reforms'. By this she meant that in the course of fighting for small gains, masses of people learn their own strength and grow to see how they can liberate themselves. The anti-capitalist movement needs to take very seriously the motto of "Think globally, act locally". Alongside mobilising for events like Genoa it needs to link in with the current local fights in workplaces and local communities. It needs to carry the spirit of direct action to these struggles and infuse them with a knowledge that there is a real alternative to this system.





Four people
give their
reasons for
going to
Genoa to
protest
against the
G8 summit
in July

ROWAN DEMPSEY, Video Jockey and Globalise Resistance activist.

EVER NOTICE how a mortgage costs three times the actual cost of the house? That two-thirds of the payment is simply interest? Imagine if the interest on your mortgage kept on increasing beyond your reach, sentencing you to a lifetime in debt. Then, when you died, the same mortgage was forced on your children, and on their children. Now imagine your family starved to death inside your home because you had no money for food after mortgage payments. It's not funny, is it? It's not funny for 7 million children who die each year because money is spent on debt instead of health and clean water.

The developing world owes \$370bn in debt mostly to the IMF and World Bank. Loan sharks by another name, these pro-capitalist organisations consistently refuse to back down and cancel this debt. That they promise cancellation, along with Bono, Gordon Brown and other jumpers-on-the-bandwagon, and fail to deliver exacerbates the problem. But they are scared. The 2-mile radius, 3-metre high fence around the FTAA conference in Quebec proves their fear. The more hearts and minds we win, the more people we are. The more people we have with us, the more likely it is that people in positions of real power will stop telling the 3rd World to eat cake and, bring down the undemocratic IMF and World Bank.

EOIN O BROIN, Gluaiseacht.

Gluaiseacht — Conas a tharla sé? Last November some people in Limerick decided to organise a 50-seater bus to the Hague to join 5000 other Friends of the Earth in building a dyke around the World Climate Change Conference centre! On the ferry home Gluaiseacht was born in a sea of buzzing expectation and newfound motivation in us all, ready to take on the world! So in December we set to meeting, talking, discussing and thinking to find a name, a purpose and a mission! We decided on Gluaiseacht (movement, in Gaelic) for Global Justice, with three main campaign areas: Genetic Engineering, Lifestyles and International Economics. Three campaigns with definite goals! Then in February of this year, Gluaiseacht participated in the Faslane Anti-Nuclear arms protest in Scotland. This protest received widespread coverage in the Irish media and achieved its goal of letting the Irish people know this base existed. Our next foreign venture will be to Genoa in July for the G8 summit.

The G8 meeting will be discussing debt and the World Trade Organisation's next offering the General Agreement on Trade and Services. This agreement would pave the way for the privatisation of health, transport, education, energy, water supply and practically anything else that can be privatised. Is this the way to bring about equality and to protect the environment? In addition to the three campaigns, Gluaiseacht hopes to work on raising awareness of how climate change affects Ireland and also to work on the crisis of implementation that besets environmental and human rights legislation at the moment. Focusing on the forthcoming Johannesburg Earth Summit can do this. Gluaiseacht seeks to empower the youth of Ireland to know that they can make a difference!

Globalise resistance

Primary Teacher, INTO

activist and member of the Socialist Workers Party.

MY BRANCH of the Irish National Teachers' Organisation is supporting the protests at the G8 summit and we are donating £300 to help a teacher from a North Inner City school to travel there. There are many teachers who desperately want to see a cancellation of Third World debt. There are members of my branch who have seen at first hand the devastating effects that lack of public spending has on educational access in the Developing World. Amazingly, the money spent on weapons in just four days would be enough to fund global access to education.

As a teacher I want to make it clear to the world's leaders that I will not support a system that consistently puts profit before people and denies ordinary people a say in the way the world is run. I believe that all public services are coming under threat through the mania for privatisation that is evident in all corners of the globe. Even in Ireland we can see private companies creeping into the area of education. An advertising company currently rents ad space in 80 Dublin schools. The protests in Gothenburg at the European Union summit are an indication of the extent of the anger that exists against the system. The reaction of the police, and the media's desire to portray those protesting as an unrepresentative and dangerous minority, show just how worried our rulers are. I believe the protests in Genoa will be even bigger and I hope that many trade unionists from all over Europe will join the demonstrations.

CIAN O'CALLAGHAN, Deputy President, Union of Students in Ireland.

I SEE the fight for increased investment in education and other public services as a central part of the wider struggle that is taking place around the world. It's part of a struggle by:

- communities in Dublin against an unjust bin tax
- environmentalists for a sustainable world
- workers for decent pay and conditions
- all those who are fighting for decent health care, education and public transport instead of a system designed for the benefit of the multinationals

Students are also feeling disillusioned with the traditional political system. They have little faith or interest in a political system that has been dominated for years by the interests of big business. However this disinterest in traditional politics has seen a resurgence in interest in building real democracy, in groups like Gluaiseacht for Global Justice. I think that Genoa is going to be the largest mobilisation of people from around Europe in years sending out a message of "people before profit" and "human need instead of corporate greed". Genoa will show the billions around the world watching on their T.V. screens that there is hope for a better world. It will expose the G8 world leaders and their big business friends as a minority in contrast to the tens of thousands gathered to voice their protest.

PFI — Selling our Services

Why we should stop privatisation by another name...

At present the whole of the public sector in Northern Ireland is facing the threat of privatisation under the name of Private Finance Initiative (PFI). During the British General Election in June none of the major political parties in Northern Ireland mentioned PFI.

PFI was introduced in Britain by the Tory party in 1992. Faced with a rising tide of hostility to privatisation, the Tory Chancellor Norman Lamont brought in PFI to disguise the attacks that were taking place on the public sector. But it was seen as 'privatisation by the back door' and such was the level of opposition, the Tories were forced to gently drop PFI. When New Labour came into office in 1997, PFI came back with a vengeance. New Labour has been applying PFI across the whole of the public sector, as has the new power-sharing Executive that has arisen out of the Good Friday Agreement in the North. Adams, Hume, Trimble and Paisley have continued where the Tories left off.

PFI means that private companies take over the running of major sections of the public sector to the detriment of public sector workers and of consumers. If a new school needs to be built then private companies bid for the contract to "design, build and operate" the school. It means that a private company owns the building and rents it to the Department of Education. It means that caretakers, catering workers and cleaners work for the private company. It is the same in hospitals where PFI means that all "non-clinical staff" are transferred from the public sector to the private sector.

Research conducted by *Unison*, the public sector union, has found that wages and conditions for newly employed workers in PFI schools and hospitals are much worse than the public sector. In London one group of workers was paid only 50% of what they would have got in the public sector. The working week was on average 20% longer. The vast majority of new PFI workers could not become members of a government approved pension scheme and were offered no pension scheme at all. Maternity leave, sick pay and paid holidays were all worse than in the public sector or non-existent.

This is not really surprising as the private companies are all competing against each other to get the contract. The employer with the worst terms and conditions for his employees can put in the lowest bid, and stand a better chance of winning the contract.

Users of the public sector suffer too. Complaints have been made about the PFI plans for rebuilding a secondary school in South Belfast. Northwin Ltd won the contract to "design, build and operate" Wellington College. The construction is taking place on the original site of the school. The problem is that the company is building a smaller school than the original one and selling off the rest of the land for commercial redevelopment.

So the pupils and teachers suffer because of reduced facilities and Northwin makes even more money selling much sought after land. Northwin Ltd is one of the major beneficiaries of PFI. It is a consortium of the three largest construction companies in Northern Ireland - Braidwater Enterprises Ltd, Farrens Ltd and John Graham Ltd. It knows nothing about running schools and is interested only in profit.

This is only the tip of the iceberg. Another project under way is the sewage treatment works in Holywood, Co Down, where a private company, Clearwater Ltd, is responsible for building and operating the plant which treats sewage before it is pumped into the Irish Sea. Environmentalists are rightly concerned that Clearwater Ltd cannot be trusted to put the environment before its profits.

PFI amounts to a cash bonanza for the rich involving hundred of millions of pounds... Martin McGuinness has defended the latest PFI announcements as being 'in the best interests of the education service'.

PFI amounts to a cash bonanza for the rich involving hundred of millions of pounds. In the case of St Genevieve's Secondary School in West Belfast, 'consultants' for the project were paid £600,000 before a single brick was laid. Martin McGuinness has defended the latest PFI announcements as being "in the best interests of the education service".

The situation in the Health Service is exactly the same. The Hayes Report on the future of acute hospitals in Northern Ireland is expected to recommend the privatisation of much needed services and the loss of thousands of jobs. This will come on top of other PFI deals like the one signed in 1998 between the Royal Victoria Hospital (RVH), Hewlett Packard and Cardiac Services Ltd. Under this deal these two companies supplied the intensive care units and the operating theatres at the RVH with IT and clinical equipment. In return the companies receive a fee for every patient treated. This sort of arrangement has been described as a hire purchase agreement in which the 'buyer' of the goods makes extremely large regular payments but never gets to own the goods. Work is also under way for a private company to supply a Cancer Unit at Belfast City Hospital at a cost of £28 million and the redevelopment of other parts of the RVH at a cost of £40 million. The evidence of what happens when private companies are let into the Health Service is being ignored by de Brun. When cleaning services were privatised at the Lagan Valley Hospital in Lisburn in the 1990's the private company Compass refused to recognise the union, terminated contracts, cut wages and employed casual labour.

PFI in the NHS is also bad for patients. In Worcestershire, in England, the Health Authority has been forced to cut back on the amount of beds it provides because estimates by the PFI company were unreliable. Worcestershire Health Authority was quoted £49 million for a PFI contract, this later rose to £108 million. To find the extra money the health authority reduced the amount of beds by 50%. By using PFI at the RVH, the City Hospital and hospitals throughout Northern Ireland Bairbre de Brun is attacking workers and patients.

In fact, PFI is central to the new Executive set up under the Good Friday Agreement. The SDLP, Sinn Féin, the Ulster Unionists and the DUP have all signed up to the "Programme for Government". This is the Executive's plans for the economy over the next couple of years. It talks about Northern Ireland being "overdependent on the public sector" and claims that "new business approaches need to be introduced into the public sector". It asserts that there "are opportunities for the use of private finance in all major service provisions / infrastructure projects to increase value for money through Private Finance Initiatives. When a motion was put to the Assembly which called for a rejection of the 'Programme for Government' because it didn't "address the social inequalities of Northern Ireland", Sinn Féin members Bairbre de Brun and Francie Molloy lined up beside Unionists Reg Empey and Michael McGimpsey to vote for the 'Programme for Government'.

This Programme is a programme for privatisation and for PFI and was "warmly welcomed" by the Confederation of British Industry. It has been called "the glue that holds the Executive together". Whatever the main parties disagree about they are united in attacking working class people. But working class people have the power to stop the Executive and PFI. Compass workers went on strike and the company was forced to restore wages, end casual labour and recognise the union. The NHS gave in and transferred the cleaning services and the workers back into the NHS. This sort of militant action by workers against PFI exposes the communal politicians at Stormont and is the real way forward in Northern Ireland.

Sean Mc Veigh



The man behind the desk

What is neoliberalism?

Neoliberalism is the watchword of free market capitalists. Anti-capitalists have attacked the neoliberal agenda, seeing it as representing the worst and most inhumane aspects of capitalism. What it is and how has it come to be adopted by all governments?

Mark Walshe investigates.

★ 19000 children die every day as a result of the debt crisis

★ Sub-Saharan Africa pays £250 million per week in debt repayments to the West

★ A billion people live on less than a dollar a day

★ Exxon, the multinational oil corporation, reported profits this year of £16.9 billion, equivalent to the total debt of 13 African countries

★ \$8 billion, the equivalent of four days a year spending on weapons, would be sufficient for all the children of the world to go to school.

In 1987 Charles Haughey was elected Taoiseach on the back of a campaign which opposed cutbacks in public services, in particular health. Yet within six months an agenda of cost-cutting ensued that left opposition politicians stunned. 20,000 public servants were made redundant as hospital wards were closed down. Over the next decade the building of local authority houses was cut dramatically. Funding of public transport was slashed and today Ireland has one of the highest pupil teacher ratios of OECD countries. The neoliberal revolution had hit Ireland.

Today, throughout the world, the sort of austerity measures and structural adjustment programs being enforced on developing countries are justified with the same logic. Yet the complete failure of these measures in Eastern Europe and sub-Saharan Africa gives lie to the idea that this sort of hard medicine brings economic prosperity (let alone addressing inequality). We live in a world more unequal now than at any time in human history. Today, the constant drive towards privatisation, the restraints placed on wages and union activity, the under-funding of public services and the tax-breaks given to big business are all part of that neoliberal agenda.

Opposition to neoliberalism is mounting worldwide. In France for growing organisations like Attac, which want to curb corporate greed, and for philosopher Pierre Bourdieu neo-liberalism is the ideological justification of the brazen pursuit of profit. Naomi Klein's best selling *No Logo* has shown how brands and market obsession have turned people into things. Susan George has highlighted the obscenity of debt repayments with neoliberal strings attached: these kill 19,000 children a day across the world. In Seattle Washington Prague and Gothenburg, the WTO, the G8 and EU Heads of State have come to be seen as the embodiment of neo-liberalism and a target for protest. In Ireland spontaneous opposition to mad market privatisation, calls to cancel world debt, the No vote to the Nice Treaty, and the growing anti-capitalist movement itself are all part of the same disgust at neo-liberal economic orthodoxy.

Many in the anti-capitalist movement see neo-liberalism as something different to old style capitalism, qualitatively worse to what went before.

So is neoliberalism a new form of capitalism?

Neo-liberalism needs to be seen in the context in which it arose. Crises and shocks to the system such as the oil crisis in the seventies and the recession which followed led politicians to make a sharp turn away from the economic orthodoxies which had gone before. Keynesianism, which was about the state regulating the economy, had been the dominant economic theory until then. As crisis struck it was jet-

tisoned wholesale.

From Thatcher to Eastern Europe, from Reagan to Kohl, and also including many on the left, monetarism and the market were heralded as the new saviour. After the Second World War they saw decades upon decades of near-effortless expansion of markets and assumed that it would always be so. Suddenly capitalists and their governments were faced with economic crises and the squeezing of their profits. They sought "restructuring" and "rationalising" (a euphemism for sacking workers). They searched for new sources of profit from privatisation of public services and took over resources from the world's weaker states through trade and debt negotiations. It was not just a propaganda exercise, it was based on the capitalist drive towards new markets in search of profits.

A new ideology emerged. The 1980s saw the rise of the "new right", a coherent and explicitly conservative political ideology, one which prioritised, indeed glorified, the individual. The central value was competition; be it between individuals, firms or nation states. Competition allowed great individuals to prosper. Thatcher once said: "It is our job to glory in inequality and see that talents and abilities are given vent and expression for the benefit of all." The market was the obvious mechanism for this venting of talents and abilities and it should be given free rein. The welfare state and the increased influence of trade unions had created "unnatural monopolies". This placed constraints on the market and stood in the way of free unbridled competition. The "nanny-state" turned people into dependents rather than competitors. From now on the state should take a back seat. It would be a nightwatchman, in the words of Adam Smith.

Indeed, there was nothing new in any of this. This whole ideology was based on a particular view of human society and the human condition. Centuries ago philosophers like Thomas Hobbes described human existence as: "a war of all against all" manifesting competitiveness, mutual fear and the desire for glory." But given the various liberation and civil rights movements of the 60s and 70s, the new right represented a reactionary backlash. These movements had tried to explain inequality and oppression from a political, historical and social basis. Thus injustice was not inevitable. Poverty need not be the norm. Society could be changed.

The new right turned this idea on its head. Inequality existed because people were naturally unequal. Competitive struggle was the natural order and the endeavours of the smartest, strongest and bravest would benefit society as a whole. The dogma of the new right was epitomised by Thatcher who regularly



proclaimed that there was no alternative to the market — and no society either.

In Britain public services were privatised. From 1979 to 1994, the overall number of jobs in the public sector was reduced from 7 million to 5 million. Unions were severely weakened. Profits that once went to the Treasury now go into private hands. State-owned enterprises were sold off one by one — the national airline, water supply, gas, telephone and electric utilities and the railway system. Competition and the drive for profit over-ruled everything else, including efficiency. These services have become far worse and, like the train service, completely chaotic. Yet Ireland is now adopting the same plan wholesale.

Internationally, the frenetic drive for profit led to a global streamlining of policy on the part of the capitalists. Considerable power was given to institutions like the IMF and the World Bank. Both organisations were set up in 1944 at the Breton Woods conference. The idea was that both institutions would help with reconstruction and create a prosperous global economy. The IMF would provide short-term assistance to countries suffering economic crises and the World Bank would look after the long term development of poorer countries. These institutions always had a free-market bias. But in the 1970s and 80s they were to become instrumental in enforcing the agendas of people like Friedrich Hayek and Milton Friedman who, along with others at the University of Chicago, reinvented monetarism. This "new monetarism" provided the theoretical backbone of the Thatcher-Reagan era. This ideological rethink meant that now rather than the problems of global capitalism being the fault of irresponsible multinationals, it was government interference that was to blame. Poor countries in the midst of economic crises had little choice but to accept the IMF medicine in the form of Structural Adjustment Programs with catastrophic effects. As a result, these countries have been forced to spend more on servicing their debts to banks than on basic services that they so badly need.

Neoliberalism demanded the dismantling of all barriers to the free movement of goods, finance and capital. The World Trade Organisation set out to enforce this in practice through sanctions against states that did not open up services to competition.

GATS leads to privatisation of public services, TRIPS (Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights) protect the right of companies to make super profits, while ordinary people suffer

Transactions cutting across state boundaries, particularly financial transactions, played an increasing role. In 1994, the WTO openly advocated privatisation with the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS). This affects potentially 160 areas including telecommunications, banking and investment, transport, education, health and the environment.

One of the goals of GATS is to classify the public health sector as part of the service industry, eventually opening the door to full scale commercialisation along the lines of the American model where private corporations are dominant.

What is surprising is the degree to which the neoliberal agenda has united the traditional left with the right. Schroeder and Blair may talk about the Third Way, but in reality their policies coast along the neoliberal freeway. Their advocacy of a caring market means little when the logic of the market is to turn everything to profit making. Not alone have Private Finance Initiatives become the Blair approach to privatisation but they also represent the final nail in the state sector. Guardian columnist George Monbiot describes PFI as the Heineken of Privatisation reaching parts that other privatisations haven't. Blairism is no different on tax policy either. In 1979 the corporation tax rate in Britain was 52%. Today it stands at 30% and Blair has boasted that British business is subject to fewer strictures than corporations in the US.

The failure of Keynesianism led to a rethink of reformism. The state regulating the economy had been the mainstay of reformist ideology. It distinguished reformists from traditional right-wing politicians. When that path failed, along with the collapse of Stalinism, reformism had to reinvent itself. Its feeble reincarnation as the Third Way sounds more like science fiction than reality because few believe that it is much different to Conservatism. Ruairi Quinn is no different to his European Social Democratic counterparts — most of the time he sounds indistinguishable from other openly neo-liberal politicians. The Irish Labour Party openly joins the rush to privatisation and its councillors vote for refuse charges.

Those angry about inequality, the wrecking of the environment and the ravages of debt repayment want to do something more than what these reformists offer. It was complete disillusionment with the uniformity of neoliberal politics from left and right that raised the anti-capitalist tempo in the beginning.

Some however still hope that reforms to the system can provide a solution. Wayne Ellwood's recent Guide to Globalisation, after a brilliant indictment of the ravages of global capitalism, calls for redesigning the system through structural and political reform of the IMF and through the taxing of financial institutions. The Attac organisation has made popular the introduction of a Tobin tax on all financial transactions as a way of redressing the North-South gap. The idea highlights graphically the problem because such is the level of profit that even a 1% tax could wipe out the sort of poverty that exists in the Third World.

It is a demand worth fighting for because it targets profits. But given the free rein of capital in the system, and the tax dodging record of corporations, the implementation of this tax will be pretty difficult. Equally, the IMF does not stand alone but is the organisational expression of sections of capital, particularly US capital.

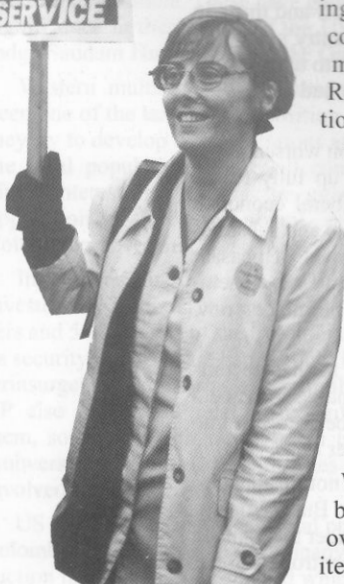
Reforming the IMF is like asking the Vatican to expel the Pope. The task invariably comes up against how the system operates. The most effective reform of the IMF would be to fight against the interests of big capital that sustains it.

In Ireland, we have learnt the hard way that big business seldom submits to taxation and have ample proof that the mega-rich have been singularly adept at working the system. Even methods of examining the extent of fraud and corruption devised by the state, such as the Tribunals, have been in-built with protection for those being investigated. Justice for them and their political minions, let alone curbing their power, become a bit of joke, at least through the judicial system.

But in Ireland the neo-liberal agenda is being pushed through with a vengeance. We have one of the most right-wing governments in Europe and one which has no ideological hang-ups about unfettered capitalism. Hardly a week goes by where privatisation and the floating of public companies is not mentioned.

Refuse collection, water, and private investment in transport is the order of the day. Ironically, public utilities, like the Ballymore Eustace water treatment plant in Wicklow, are being bought over by discredited privatisers

Socialist Worker
**VICTORY
TO THE
NURSES
SAVE THE
HEALTH
SERVICE**



NEOLIBERALISM IN PRACTICE

International loans and lending leads to cuts in Health, Education and other public services



who have wreaked havoc with the public utilities in Britain.

In Ireland the unions have given the neoliberal agenda a leg-up. They have embraced the market with all the zeal of recent converts, and some like SIPTU's Des Geraghty have seen fit to attack public sector workers as inefficient. Social partnership deals have brought them into the neoliberal net quicker than other European trade union leaders who have sometimes had to respond to the opposition on the ground.

The CGT union in France, for example, was instrumental in mobilising against Nice whereas the ICTU, unanimously and with no consultation called for a Yes vote on the Nice Treaty. They have not even had the democratic decency to recognise their mistake. This error and their tattered credibility may well open up the space for union members to take action on privatisation.

Not content with bowing down to the "commercialisation" of the public sector, ICTU and SIPTU have rushed to totally and uncritically embrace benchmarking. Their hasty stand takes privatisation even further. Now it is not just a question of letting the search for profit loose on our services but also taking the private sector ☐ notoriously precarious and hostile to union rights ☐ as the model for our jobs. By 2002, Joe O'Toole's ATM machine, for which benchmarking was to provide access, will possibly be empty, and the ICTU Public Services Committee may well be having to wipe the egg off their faces.

Irish workers are voting on the neo-liberal agenda with their feet. So far, only 2% of the 80,000 Dubliners billed have paid their refuse charges and are, instead, signing up in droves to the *No to the Bin Charges Campaign*. Nurses are again protesting outside hospitals at the chronic underfunding of our health service. These campaigns, alongside the international protests in Gothenburg, and Genoa in July, are the best way to call a halt to the neoliberal agenda and to show it up for what it is ☐ a programme for profits in the interests of profits.

The opposition to the neoliberal agenda is in the fight against its ravages here and also in the Third World. The slogan there is literally "Fight or Starve". Whether forced by material circumstance or out of sheer moral outrage, people have fought back in a whole host of ways.

Today increasing numbers of people are coming to the conclusion that issues like environmental destruction, poverty and war are products of the insatiable drive for profit. They see a system based on competition where the only virtue that is rewarded is the ability to exploit for money. All the signs are that the neoliberal agenda may just be past its sell-by date.

Plan Colombia: a new Vietnam?

Plan Colombia is presented as a war on drugs — in fact, as **Richard Boyd Barrett** explains, it is a war of a different kind.

During the last days of the Clinton administration in the US a \$1.3 bn 'aid' package to Colombia was announced. The aid is supposed to assist the Colombian government in the 'war on drugs' yet, as with so many US interventions around the world, 'Plan Colombia' is certain to make a bad situation worse.

The aim of the plan is to eliminate all cocaine production and a key element is the spraying of coca bushes with a Monsanto manufactured toxic pesticide. The aerial spraying began in late December and has already caused widespread devastation for humans, crops and livestock.

In the first two months of this year, local authorities reported that 4,289 humans had skin or gastric disorders and 178,377 creatures had been killed. The coca bushes though had generally survived, reviving quickly after damaged leaves were removed by farmers. The spraying has been a disaster for the people of Colombia and this is likely to be just the tip of the iceberg.

The bulk of the Plan Colombia package is made up of military equipment such as Blackhawk helicopters, satellite surveillance and cluster bombs. They will be used by the Colombian military to take on the so called narco-guerrillas who the US blame for the massive trade in cocaine and heroin from Colombia.

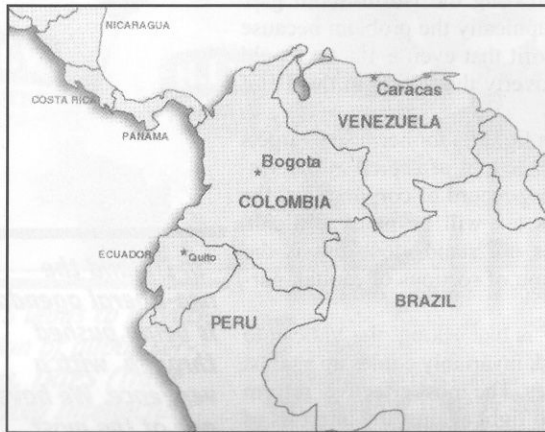
Certainly, Colombia is one of the biggest producers of drugs in the world. 70% of the cocaine and 50% of the heroin reaching the US originates there. But the US has another agenda. Behind the rhetoric of a war against narco-terrorism lies the hand of US imperialism and the interests of Western multinationals.

It is a policy that may well lead to a repeat of the horrors of Vietnam and El Salvador in a country that has already endured more than its fair share. The President of the Colombian Permanent Committee on Human Rights has described Colombia as 'one of the most tragic countries in Latin America'.

Over 300,000 people have died in the 35 year long civil war that continues to rage in Colombia. There are an estimated 12 political killings a day. The conflict is between right-wing paramilitary groups closely linked to the military and a number of leftist guerrilla groups.

The biggest of the leftist groups is the FARC (the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) who now control about forty percent of the country largely in the rural South. Two other smaller groups, the ELN and EPN, control much smaller areas in the North of the country.

The conflict has its origins in Colombian history. The 1940s in Colombia saw the growth of a labour and trade union movement and a newly organised peasantry. They demanded land reform and labour rights from a state dominated by a landed oligarchy. In 1948 a populist liberal leader, Jorge Eliecer Gaitan, who had led a mass movement for reform, was assassinated. This sparked a brutal five year long civil conflict called 'La Violencia'



which claimed 300,000 lives.

The conflict ended in 1953 when the military seized power. Four years later the two main parties, the Liberals and Conservatives, agreed a power sharing arrangement and the military gave up control.

The agreement saw the end of the bloodshed but consolidated the power of a small wealthy elite. The two main parties divided between them positions of power and alternated the presidency. The mass of workers and peasants gained nothing and other political forces were excluded from power and later repressed.

With the avenue of conventional politics cut off, the situation led to armed rebellion. In 1966 the FARC, based on the rural peasantry in the South, declared themselves in rebellion against the country's elite. The other smaller guerrilla groups were also formed at this time.

The guerrillas were inspired by the recent revolution in Cuba and put forward a program of land reform. The Colombian military responded by helping establish right-wing paramilitary groups to crush the guerrillas.

In the 1980s the drugs industry took off and those in control of the trade, along with the country's wealthy elite, began to establish their own militias to terrorise the guerrillas and any potential support they had among the people.

The last ten years has seen the situation worsen as the Colombian economy has opened itself up fully to the multinationals and embraced the neo-liberal economic agenda. The removal of protective barriers and subsidies has destroyed the livelihoods of thousands of peasant farmers. Cut-backs in public spending have seen unemployment rise to 20%. Some 57% of Colombians now live in poverty.

Economic collapse and poverty has further encouraged the drug trade. Peasant farmers, unable to make a living in conventional agriculture, have been forced into the cultivation of coca and poppy in order to survive.

The US claim that Plan Colombia is not designed to interfere with the country's civil conflict. But the operations against drug traffickers proposed under the plan are nearly all in the FARC and guerrilla controlled areas.

And while FARC certainly derives some of its funding from taxes levied on farmers producing the drug crops, all independent observers say that the right-wing paramilitary groups linked to the military are by far the biggest beneficiaries of the trade.

The leader of the right-wing paramilitaries, Carlos Castano, himself admitted in a TV interview that the drugs trade provided 70% of the groups funding. These same paramilitaries, according to the Colombian Commission of Jurists, are responsible for 75% of the killings taking place each year. Their victims are not only guerrilla combatants. Eight out of the twelve political killings taking place each day are of civilians. Colombia is now the most dangerous place on earth for a trade unionist to live.

The US military aid to Colombia is going to a military that has well established links with the same paramilitary groups responsible for the killings. The US State Department's 1999 Human Rights Report on Colombia said of the army: "At times, individual commanders and troops at local levels armed and coordinated actions or shared intelligence with paramilitary groups."

The Colombian military and government have also been implicated at a high level in drugs trafficking.

The US Drug Enforcement Agency reports that "all branches of government" are involved in "drug related corruption." For example, in November 1998 US customs and DEA found 415kg of cocaine and 6kg of heroin in a Colombian airforce plane that landed in Florida. It led to the arrest of several airforce personnel.

Sections of the US military have also been implicated in this illegal trade. A US Colonel involved in training Colombian security forces in counter narcotics operations and his wife recently pleaded guilty to conspiracy to smuggle heroin out of Colombia.

The war on drugs is a pretext to mask the US's true motives in Colombia. It's real agenda has more to do with supporting forces sympathetic to its interests in a region it has long considered its 'backyard'.

The US has a long history of backing right-wing forces and regimes in Latin America to crush popular or left wing movements looking for democracy and social justice. In the seventies, the CIA backed the bloody coup that ousted the left wing government of Allende in Chile and installed the dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet.

The US funded the ten year long war of the Contras against the Sandinista government in the aftermath of the 1979 Nicaraguan revolution. It also armed and supported the death squads in El Salvador responsible for the massacres of tens of thousands in the 1980s.

Colombia is now of particular importance as it has one of the biggest untapped oil reserves in the Western hemisphere. These have gained even greater significance in the context of the US failure to dislodge Saddam Hussein during the Gulf War.

Western multinational oil companies have also been one of the targets of opposition in Colombia as they try to develop their operations at the expense of the local population. These oil companies have a direct interest in crushing the guerrillas and any opposition to the neo-liberal policies of the Colombian government.

In 1996 the Guardian revealed that BP, the largest investor in Colombia, had secretly rented 150 officers and 500 soldiers of the Colombian army to serve its security interests and had brought in British counterinsurgency professionals to train the Colombians. BP also exchanged intelligence information with them, some of which was used in tracking and killing local "subversives." Other oil companies in Colombia have been involved in similar operations.

US oil multinational Occidental produces about one third of Colombia's oil exports. The company hopes to expand its production into the Samore oil field which holds an estimated \$35



American backed right-wing militia members

billion worth of oil. The planned drilling sites interfere with the traditional lands of the Uwa, an indigenous group who have already suffered the effects of oil drilling in the area and who have been protesting against the new wave of drilling. The ELN have also attacked a number of Occidental pipelines.

In February, an Occidental executive testified before a house sub-committee in favour of the military package. He said that the Colombian military were inferior to the guerrillas and needed support. Occidental, whose shareholders include Al Gore, gave more than half a million dollars to the Democrats in donations. Other major lobbyists for intervention in Colombia include US arms manufacturers.

In April, *Newsweek* magazine ran a story detailing how the Clinton administration was influenced to support military intervention in Colombia after the publication of a survey on drugs. A Democratic pollster conducted the survey showing that the public perceived an increase in drug use and blamed the Democrats for it.

The poll was commissioned by Lockheed Martin, the huge manufacturer of military aircraft. The military package called for the purchase of three Lockheed manufactured P-3 radar planes at a cost of \$68 million.

Other arms manufacturers who lobbied for intervention include Textron, manufacturer of the Huey helicopter, and United Technologies that make the Blackhawk helicopter. Both companies started to make huge donations to the Democrats last year in the run up to the announcement of the Colombia aid.

All this makes clear the real agenda behind Plan Colombia. The US wants to secure the interests of western multinationals. Under the guise of a war on drugs, it wants to crush any opposition to this agenda.

However, the US and its supporters in Colombia are not having things all their own way. The peasants and indigenous peoples in many of the rural areas continue to resist the onslaught of the multinationals and the neo-liberal policies that are ruining their livelihoods. This is why the guerrillas still enjoy huge support in many areas of the country.

In the cities, the same neo-liberal policies and austerity measures imposed by the IMF have produced large-scale resistance. August last year saw a 24 hour general strike against IMF measures. March this year saw huge strikes by teachers and other public sector workers.

The key is for peasant resistance to begin to link up with the working class movement in the cities. For our part we need to show our solidarity with ordinary Colombians by building the growing international movement against the policies of the IMF, WTO and western multinationals that wish to destroy people and their environment on the altar of profit.

US Spending on Plan Colombia : \$1.3bn
Colombia's Spending on the Plan \$5.5 bn
Percentage of Colombians living in poverty: 57%
THE BOTTOM LINE:
Mining Companies' revenues each year: \$600-\$700 bn

rod fitzsimons

Abbeylara: the cover-up continues

The Gardai want to suppress the truth about what happened in the Co Longford village of Abbeylara at Easter last year, when they shot dead 27 year old building worker John Carthy. He died with four police bullets in his back.

So far there have been two inquiries into the shooting: the coroner's inquest which established only that John Carthy was shot dead by Gardai, and an internal Garda investigation which concluded — arrogantly, as if it was addressing a nation of idiots — that the police were big-hearted, brave and blameless while John Carthy was bad, mad and sad.

The official Garda Report, in the name of Commissioner Pat Byrne, is an utterly cynical exercise in self-justification. Not only does it gratuitously malign the character of the late John Carthy; it is completely unconcerned with the vital questions that this appalling killing provokes. The Garda report can only be seen as final proof that the Irish system of police accountability — Garda officers inquiring into the behaviour of fellow Garda officers — is unsuitable, unworkable and unacceptable and in urgent need of replacement with an independent complaints investigation system.

It was in response to public outrage at the appalling police report into the shooting of Mr Carthy that the Oireachtas Committee on Justice tried to inquire into events at Abbeylara. The committee began questioning — in public and before live television cameras — the senior police officers who planned and participated in the bungled operation. But the Gardai have made every effort to scupper the investigation, down to seeking a court order to stop it in its tracks. They know that TD's, however remotely, feel the pressure of public opinion, and the public wants the truth. The Garda call for a judicial inquiry as an alternative to a Dail investigation should fool no one. They are betting on a sympathetic judge, unelected and unaccountable, but above all committed to putting the interests of State above the interests of truth.

A great deal has already come out about what happened at Abbeylara, thanks to the determination of Mr Carthy's family who are determined to ensure that the Gardai don't get away with a cover-up. Awkward questions raised by family members after the shooting forced the prompt calling of an inquest into Mr Carthy's death. The families of previous victims of the Garda Emergency Response Unit (ERU) have not been so lucky: there have still been no inquests into the deaths of men shot dead in 1997 and 1998.

What emerged at the inquest into Mr Carthy's death was a picture of a botched Garda operation. The blunders began with the crazed decision to send 15 armed police officers — totting pistols, assault rifles, automatic shotguns and sub-machine guns — to lay siege to a distraught man with a history of mental illness who posed a threat to no one but himself. Twenty four bungled hours later police opened fire on Mr Carthy as he emerged unexpectedly from his house taking the ERU hit-squad by surprise — their commanding officer had gone off for a cup of tea.

It all began on the afternoon of 19th April last year when he took his licensed shotgun and began firing erratically in the garden. Fearing for his safety, John's mother called the local Guards at Granard. John had had dealings in Granard Garda station before: he was badly beaten there some months earlier by a detective investigating a minor incident in Abbeylara that had not, in fact, involved John. So when two officers arrived at his house on the 19th, he had reason to be fearful. He fired a few warning shots from windows, but never aimed at the Guards — a fact they later confirmed to one of John's cousins.

Yet when Superintendent Joe Shelly of Mullingar got to hear of the incident an hour or so after it began, he immediately put the word out that a dangerous gunman was trying to shoot policemen in Abbeylara, and using this grossly exaggerated account, he called in as many armed detectives as he could muster.

Shelly was also the man who passed the word up the line to senior commanders who immediately mobilised the ERU. The subsequent discovery that they were dealing with a sick man as

opposed to an armed criminal didn't provoke any pause for thought let alone a change of tactics: the State's most deadly cops continued to pour into Abbeylara.

There was no attempt made to get John's psychiatrist to the scene, even though John had an appointment to see him in Dublin at the very time the police were besieging his house. The ERU man who was put in charge of talking John out peacefully had only recently completed training as a negotiator. This was probably his first 'real-life' experience in the role, and there has been no evidence he had specialist training in how to deal with a mentally ill man. He certainly failed to establish any rapport with John.

The failure to win John's trust could not have been helped by the Guards' refusal to give him cigarettes. It didn't take a genius to work out that an already tense situation could only be made worse by the denial of nicotine to a chain smoker. Yet the Guards still claim their decision was correct. One of the most glaring failures of the Garda operation was their refusal to get Mr Carthy a solicitor — the only request he made apart from cigarettes. But here again they refuse to acknowledge that they made a mistake. John first asked for a solicitor an hour or so after the ERU set siege to his house. He said he wanted 'the best' solicitor around. They say they couldn't do anything for him because he 'refused' to give them the name of the solicitor he wanted.

Anyway, it emerged at the inquest that one of John's cousins had told Superintendent Shelly, the Scene Commander at Abbeylara, the name of the family solicitor in Longford. No attempt was made to contact this solicitor either. What is more, Shelly made no mention of this fact to the internal Garda investigation.

A workmate of John's contacted the Gardai and told them John had promised to give himself up to a solicitor called Michael Finucane. This information was passed immediately to Supt Shelly. He says he didn't know who Michael Finucane was or how to contact him. In fact, Michael is the well-known son of Pat Finucane, the Belfast solicitor shot dead by loyalists with RUC collusion. At the time of the Abbeylara siege Michael Finucane was vice-chairman of the Irish Council for Civil Liberties. As a Prime Time programme on RTE showed, his mobile phone number could be obtained in under 30 seconds from directory inquiries. But apparently the Guards say they simply couldn't locate him.

Taken together, all the evidence points to a determined, if perverse unwillingness on the part of the police to get a solicitor for Mr Carthy. Yet at the inquest they swore on oath that they had made every effort humanly possible to get a legal representative for him, claiming it was his own refusal to co-operate that resulted in their failure.

Garda evidence concerning the actual shooting of Mr Carthy raised more questions than it answered. They claimed he was 'marching' towards their command post, pointing his gun, when all four police bullets were fired into him from behind. The Guards justified the fourth and fatal shot by claiming that he continued 'marching' in an upright and menacing manner even after the third bullet had ripped through his guts, exiting from his groin.

The pathology report of Professor John Harbison casts doubt on the Garda claim. According to Harbison the third bullet, which caused severe damage, was likely to have caused spinal shock causing John to stumble and fall. In drawing this conclusion Harbison was trying to explain the strange trajectory of the fourth bullet which entered John's lower back — but exited from his upper chest — suggesting his torso was angled downwards when the bullet struck. This would have been the case if he were falling. Of course, if he was falling then the fourth bullet was not fired to protect life and could therefore be found to have been unlawful. As it was the fourth bullet that killed him, this would mean the killing itself was unlawful.

That is a verdict the Gardai do not want to hear. That's why they will go to any length to prevent the truth about Abbeylara ever coming out.

Taken together, all the evidence points to a determined, if perverse unwillingness on the part of the police to get a solicitor for Mr Carthy.

Antonio Gramsci and the alternative to capitalism



Gramsci is to the Italian socialist movement what Connolly is to socialism in Ireland. He left his mark on the revolutionary wave that swept Italy in the early twentieth century. Eighty years on, **Marnie Holborow** argues, Gramsci's theory and practice has much to offer us today.

Antonio Gramsci lived in momentous times. Across Europe, hundreds and thousands of people fought back against exploitation, war and capitalism. In Russia, in what Gramsci called "the most majestic phenomenon that human history has ever produced", the first workers' revolution happened. In Italy in 1920-21, workers occupied the factories of the Northern cities. Six million people were involved in direct democratic action. "The capitalist order of production was rocked to its foundations and placed under workers' control", as Gramsci wrote.

Gramsci was both part of the Italian revolutionary movement and its most revolutionary expression. From his direct experience amongst workers in Turin, and through his newspaper, *Ordine Nuovo* (New Order) — the battle cry of the movement — he saw how workers could move beyond opposition to the system towards laying the foundations of a new social order.

In 1926, he was imprisoned by Mussolini's men who boasted that they would stop his brain working for twenty years. Gramsci was to be dead before those twenty years were up but even in prison, in ill health, he continued to fight back in thousands of hand-written pages which he managed to smuggle out. In these *Prison Notebooks* he tried to understand, in different circumstances, how capitalism holds on to power, how it rules and how it can be opposed.

Today, again, many people under new conditions and with new ideas, are opposing the effects of capitalism. Gramsci's arguments for taking the movement further, about taking power, and the need to challenge capitalist ideas have a sharp relevance. There were many forms of resistance to capitalism in the early 1900s in Italy including bread riots, demonstrations, land occupations and strikes. But Gramsci understood that the organisation of the workers' councils was the most important because they contained the seeds of a viable alternative to capitalism.

These new forms of workers' organisation emerged from the new conditions that capitalism itself had created. Northern Italy, between 1900 and 1920, was experiencing a foretaste of modern international capitalism, suddenly and aggressively. Shipping, engineering companies and banks were becoming increasingly international and ever-larger units of production were bursting upon the scene. Turin, home of the Fiat car company, and Milan became the most advanced steel producers in Europe.

Huge increases in productivity — modelled on the American Taylor system of mass production —

sucked in people from the surrounding villages turning them into industrial workers overnight, working on soul-destroying assembly lines. Gramsci himself came from the grinding rural poverty of Sardinia and, at twenty, found himself, like many other Southern Italians, catapulted into the industrial hub of Turin. Mega-profits and the rich takings of the "war sharks" contrasted sharply with the conditions workers had to suffer. A terrible regime of discipline in the factories, food shortages and rising inflation laid bare the glaring inequality of capitalism. A corrupt Government racked with scandal and patronage added to the discontent. Like today, the excesses of capitalism alongside new intensification of production produced resistance to its effects right across society.

Already in 1914, in "Red Week", there had been anti-capitalist and anti-war demonstrations, barricades and insurrections in the big cities. Later a flood of rallies hailed the Russian revolution with cries of "Viva Lenin!". In 1919 union membership mushroomed — the metal workers union alone increased sixteen-fold — and rural workers' leagues swelled to over a million. Workers' power was the order of the day. The official Italian Socialist Party was forced to respond to the growing radicalism. Its "maximalist" wing talked of revolution, though in practice it continued to prioritise parliamentary elections. Against these reformists, Gramsci argued, through the pages of *Ordine Nuovo*, that the workers' councils held the way out from capitalist rule. The arguments for the councils show how the working class is the key to revolutionary change.

Rank and file workers' organisations had begun to develop since 1912 when factory committees had been set up to deal with specific grievances. By 1920, the workers councils represented all workers, including non-union workers, anarchists as well as socialists, and those non-aligned. They were truly representative of the working class. *Ordine Nuovo* saw that the workers' councils could develop in much the same way as the soviets had in Russia and become the embryos of the future socialist state. The councils organised production within the factories, they directed supplies for workers and distributed provisions to workers' families. The Council Directive Committee coordinated the movement within Turin, dealing with transport and raw materials and also arming the occupying workers. This represented working class organisation from below, forged from the conditions of capitalist production itself. Where parliament dealt with abstract political rights and laws, the workers' councils combined concrete demands arising from workers' conditions

with specific political demands of the workers as a class. They were "representative in basis and industrial in arena" bringing together in a unique way the political and the economic.

Workers' councils are different to trade unions. Trade unions are defensive organisations, hamstrung by routines, rules and procedures, irredeemably marked by their role in capitalism. In *Ordine Nuovo* articles in 1921 Gramsci describes, in terms instantly recognisable of our trade unions today, their grinding bureaucracy: "Union leaders no longer live for the class struggle, no longer feel the same hopes as the masses. They have become bankers of men in a monopoly situation". The more militant workers became, the more stifling they found the trade union bureaucracy. Workers' councils become the necessary step to move beyond the old ways under capitalism.

His arguments have stood the test of time. Such workers' councils have again emerged when opposition to capitalism has become widespread. In the Portuguese revolution in 1974 workers and soldiers committees were key in the fall of the government. Again the Iranian revolution which overthrew the Shah in 1979 threw up workers' committees among the oil workers. Often, whether the revolution went forward has often depended on the strength of these independent rank and file organisations. In France in 1968, for example, despite the numbers and militancy of the general strike, the absence of any such workers committees enabled the old union leaders to step into the breach and bring the movement to heel.

In Italy in the 1920s the workers' councils were not sufficiently widespread. They were restricted to Turin, Milan, Genoa and Naples. The right and the fascists were able to fill the vacuum and drive a wedge between town and countryside. The employers' lock out which produced the occupations was a defensive battle which occurred after the crest of militancy. None of this alters the fact, however, that in the Italian workers' councils workers became aware of their potential; a class for itself was, as Gramsci argued in 1919, "born of the conquest of self-consciousness by the producers".

But the question remains. How could a revolutionary movement involving millions of workers and peasants, which represented the potential for human freedom, be channelled back into the old system? This was the problem that Gramsci grappled with, even as the occupations were happening. He returned to this in the mid 1920s when he set up the Communist Party and later in his Prison Notebooks. Gramsci answered this in three crucial ways. First the traditional organisations of the working class betrayed workers by taking the movement into a series of middle ways and compromises. The official Italian Socialist Party was not about challenging capitalism. Elections and traditional trade unions were all-important. They smothered workers' self-activity and allowed the initiative to be frittered away.

The result was not just a set-back but a rout, which opened the way for Mussolini's march on Rome. The Italian Socialist Party talked about the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat but cherished their miserable toehold of power in Parliament far more. Gramsci later spared no criticism of the reformists: they were (in words not amiss for the Tony Blairs and Ruairi Quinns of today) like "a swarm of coachmen's flies on hunt for a bowl of blancmange in which they get stuck and perish ingloriously".

His second argument was that acceptance of the framework of capitalism prevented the struggle being taken forward. Even in revolutionary times,



Factory occupations Turin 1919

decisions that represent a leap into the unknown come up against long-standing ideas that have become "common sense". Italian trade union leaders relied on this and swung the movement back on the straight and narrow. They played on a ready fatalism which was rife around the Second International — the organisation of all the Labour and Socialist Parties at the time — but it is a view that those same parties hold today. Capitalism is what we are given and capitalism is what we get and nothing can be changed. This view can continue to hold sway even among the most militant.

Gramsci argued that a clear lead could combat this resignation. In decisive revolutionary moments when everything was to play for events not arguments are the engines of change, he called this "the real dialectics of history". Without these, without extending the occupations, the reformists would step in and argue for a return to "normality".

This was what they did in 1921. They called the bluff of workers waiting in occupation and called a referendum on whether to make revolution! Not surprisingly the vote was lost. As one Milanese worker wrote at the time "You don't make a revolution by first calling a convention to decide whether there was going to be a revolution or not". It was this dynamic of workers maintaining the initiative, that would decide the fate of the movement. This was tragically lacking in 1921,

Thirdly, the logical lesson from the defeat of 1921 was the need for a new revolutionary socialist party that could seize these decisive moments. In 1926 Gramsci and others set up the Italian Communist Party. In the *Lyons Theses*, Gramsci argued that a new fighting party, clearly revolutionary not reformist, would be key for the development of workers soviets. Regrettably, the setting up of the new Communist Party was too late to be able to implement what had been so badly needed in 1921. It was born after the defeat of the workers' movement and amid fascist repression and, as a result, contained all sorts of sectish currents.

It was only later, ironically behind prison bars, that

Gramsci spared no criticism of the reformists: they were, he said "a swarm of coachmen's flies on hunt for a bowl of blancmange in which they get stuck and perish ingloriously".

Gramsci could flesh out more fully the sort of issues that such a party would have to address.

Here's where Gramsci talked about the battle of ideas as part of the alternative to capitalism. Because he wrote with the prison censor in mind, his writings in the *Prison Notebooks* were often dense and deliberately difficult. However, he tackled the question of political ideas in a clear fashion. He never saw the ideological struggle as something on its own. Views of the world for Gramsci arose from specific historical conditions and took their shape from the classes that articulated them. His concept of hegemony — the idea of domination and leadership — is only understandable within the overall context of class struggle in the real world.

Hegemony

Hegemony was about how the ruling class governed. He argued that the capitalist class ruled both by force — through police, armies and repression — and also by consent, where people appeared to accept its view of the world. Institutions in civil society such as the Catholic Church backed up and popularised the ideas of the ruling class, particularly in Italy. He saw how capitalist states in the West were able to draw on political allies to hold on to power, compared with the cruder autocracy of Russia where revolutionaries seemed to have few buffers in their way.

Hegemony was also about what the working class had to do to win power. It was about the need to win over the majority of workers to socialist ideas. This strategy depended on grasping the distinction between an all-out battle against the state — "the war of manoeuvre" — and longer drawn out battles which require different tactics "the war of position". Because Gramsci was writing at a time of defeat, his writings deal more with the second. Later reformist interpretations of Gramsci have seized on this as an alibi to drop all talk of revolution. In fact Gramsci's political life was given up to fighting for revolution and class struggle in the raw as his Turin experience proves. Gramsci's concept of hegemony highlights ways in which the workers' movement against capitalism can be strengthened. First, he shows that there is nothing inevitable about ruling ideas dominating, or about people always seeing things within the framework of the existing system. He shows that ruling class ideas are not accepted lock, stock and barrel.

Workers have contradictory ideas, some ideas that support the existing state of society but also conflicting ideas arising from their experience as workers. When workers engage in a fight with the system, even if the action is taken around their specific industry or factory, the contradictions in society come out into the open. They become aware of themselves as a class and lots of other general ideas are challenged.

For example, in the massive general strike in France in 1968, workers occupied their factories and also took over the theatres in Paris for massive meetings to discuss poli-

tics, art and democracy. Graffiti in the Latin Quarter put it succinctly — "Everything is possible". A similar process, albeit as yet at a less dramatic level than 68, is in evidence today. Workers in struggle against large corporations have begun to see their wider interests as a class. For example, in April in France, when the Danone corporation decided to lay off 1800 workers across France, workers in Calais staged a massive demonstration. The banner across the town hall read: "Calais — capital of the resistance to capitalist globalisation".

This is the sort of development of political consciousness that Gramsci meant. But radical ideas could not be sustained through spontaneous militancy alone. It required an overall political view that went beyond the immediate experience of workers and offered a credible alternative. Here the group around the *Ordine Nuovo* was crucial to providing the political glue of workers' action. In the same way that the bourgeoisie had its own intellectuals which articulated their world view, so the working class needed its own "organic intellectuals". These would not be intellectuals in the narrow, academic sense, but ordinary working people with a clear conception of the world and who would "contribute to sustain a conception of the world or to modify it, [to] bring in new modes of thought".

The revolutionary party of the working class, Gramsci argued, has to be made up of such "organic intellectuals". The working class needed its own distinctive political expression. The party had a two-way relationship with the working class. Its members were deep in the thick of day-to-day struggles alongside "real people, formed in specific historical relations, with specific feelings, outlooks, fragmentary conceptions of the world". But they were also "permanent persuaders" who, through the unified organisation of a party, could counter the manoeuvres of the capitalist class.

Their leadership was won, not imposed; it grew as part and parcel of the struggle. Gramsci shows brilliantly how spontaneity and leadership come together in a dialectical process. Leadership was not a passive acceptance of orders but "the conscious and lucid acceptance of the directive to be accomplished". Gramsci's ideas have a very modern ring about them.

Today, many agree on the inhumanity of capitalism but are grappling with how to oppose it and what to put in its place. The look of the movement in 2001 is very different to Gramsci's day, workers have skills that were unthinkable in 1920, women and black workers are in employment and global capitalism reaches far further than it did. But the same issues that were present in 1920, how to start revolution, how to strengthen it, the priorities and direction of the revolution will come on the agenda again. Antonio Gramsci is someone useful to remember in Genoa this summer and beyond.

The revolutionary party's members were deep in the thick of day-to-day struggles. But they were also "permanent persuaders" who through the unified organisation of a party could counter the manoeuvres and the voices from the capitalist class.

Reviews-Arts

Songs of the struggle

Stay Human, LP, MD, CD
Michael Franti and Spearhead
Parlophone

Michael Franti, the man who brought us industrial noise rappers the Beatnigs, the Disposable Heroes of Hiphoprisy and hard-hitting tracks like "Television the Drug of the Nation, breeding ignorance and feeding radiation" is back. Thankfully he is showing no signs of ill effect following his departure from his last record company Capitol Records after they tried to convince him to do a rap duet with Fresh Prince Will Smith!

Spearhead's new album "Stay Human" reflects the spirit of Seattle, Washington and the anti-death penalty protests in the U.S.

It's an album which marries the rich musical heritage of soul, funk and rap. The fittingly titled "Thank you" pays respect to some of Franti's musical heroes and inspirations, including the likes of Marvin Gaye, Curtis Mayfield, Bob Marley and Gil Scott-Heron. Like Marvin's "What's Going On", album "Stay Human" proves that political, socially aware music doesn't have to be dull and worthy but can be soulful and funky. Like "What's Going On" it has a thematic concept running through it, it'll make you move, groove and think!

The album is punctuated with broadcasts from Stay Human radio station which focus on the fictitious case of community activist and revolutionary Sister Fatima. Her fictional case parallels the very real death sentence hanging over the head of one time Black Panther Mumia Abu-Jamal who was framed in 1980 for the killing of a Philadelphia

policeman.

Sister Fatima has been targeted by the police since the late sixties because of her outspoken views on racial and gender equality, police violence, environmental issues and because of her compassionate use of medical marijuana. She has been wrongly convicted of murdering a prominent wealthy business couple and is due to be executed on the night before the election for governor. The current governor Franklin Shane (played by Woody Harrelson) is running low in the polls and is using Sister Fatima's case as a political tool. When one of the Stay Human radio presenters challenges Shane that the death penalty is the same as murder his response is "that's left wing pinko philosophy if ever I heard it"

Franti has long been concerned with the power and domination of the media by the elite few and in "Rock the Nation", he urges us to "take over television and radio stations, give the corporations some complication". I think this is a very relevant message for us in Ireland when you think of communications tycoons like 'Sir' Anthony O'Reilly buying up former public assets. As a line in "Sometimes" puts it "only a rat can win a rat race!"

Later we hear from Sister Fatima who gives us an insight into the real reasons for her conviction. She tell us that "they want to put a stop to my advocacies, they know that I advocate revolution; I want to unite people, whereas they want to keep people divided. They're afraid of our unity because we are



Michael Franti

the overwhelming majority and they are a tiny minority and they know that.... la Lutte Continua-Vinceremos"

Despite all six witnesses recanting their evidence, stating that they had been coerced at the time of interrogation, Sister Fatima is executed by lethal injection and governor Shane is re-elected but there is a twist to the tale...In making this album Michael Franti says "my goal is to make the revolution irresistible, to find ways to enable, enlighten and inspire people to become more compassionate" I think this is a goal we should all aspire to. "Stay Human" is out now.

INSPIRATION FOR LIFE

Bread and Roses
Dir Ken Loach

The new film by Ken Loach is a hard hitting and moving account of the struggles of immigrant janitors to win decent wages and conditions.

In the *maquiladoras*, special industrial zones where sweatshops owned by multinationals operate outside the jurisdiction of labour laws, workers are denied the right to join a union, are housed in cramped dorms, paid poverty wages and work in desperately unhygienic and hazardous environments. The 1990s saw huge increases in levels of prostitution and drug and alco-

hol addiction among the Mexican poor.

Many crossed the border into the USA in search of employment. Getting into the USA involves putting trust in ruthless human traffickers, avoiding immigration checkpoints, and dodging the bullets of crazed right-wing ranchers who have taken to shooting immigrants for sport. If you manage to survive all that and make it to America you have a place as a low paid, unskilled member of California's huge and, until recently, unorganised army of service workers.

Since the late 1980s the *Justice for Janitors Campaign* has organised tens of thousands of these immigrants to win for themselves through militant tactics the right to a living wage and health insurance. Along the way they have faced the batons of the police, the opposition of

the bosses and the stalling tactics of their own Trade Union bureaucracy.

Bread and Roses centres on one group of immigrant janitors, who for \$5.75 an hour are expected to polish floors and gather the waste left behind by executive receptions. These janitors are ignored by the lawyers and accountants who make their millions in building 56.

For Maya, the central character to get a job here she has to pay her supervisor her first month's wages as 'commission'. The janitors are watched over by security guards whose main job is to keep union organisers out of the building.

Loach excellently documents the oppressive atmosphere of a non-union shop where one minute late can mean being sacked and being sacked can mean starvation. Many of the

janitors do not initially share Maya's enthusiasm for joining the union and she clashes with her sister Rosa who has been deeply scarred by her experiences as a child prostitute in Tijuana. She tells Maya 'I hate the whole fucking world!'

Loach shows the dynamics of working class struggle. We see how it transforms atomised individuals who see each other as competitors into a unified group that look upon themselves as comrades.

In Loach's film, as in real life, the oppressed individual discovers their self-worth in the collective struggle for change.

It is not a feelgood film but does leave you feeling that we can do something to make a better world. It shows just how that world can and must be won.

Dave Lordan

Reviews-Books

A guide to action

Tony Cliff:

International Struggle and the Marxist Tradition - Selected Writings

Bookmarks £14.99

International Struggle and the Marxist Tradition is the first volume of a selection of Tony Cliff's writings. Cliff was a founder member of the International Socialist Tendency of which the Irish SWP is a member. His politics combined a strong belief in the principles of revolutionary Marxism with an understanding of the need to look at the reality of every situation. He spent time in exile in Ireland in the late forties and early fifties. He used to recount that it was when he and one other were described as the Irish Section of the Fourth International, that he understood how orthodox Trotskyism had entered a dream world. Capitalism was not entering its death agony as described by many in the movement. Rather in the 1950s and 60s it was to enter, on a world scale, into its greatest period of boom and growth.

The tragedy of the Trotskyist movement was that marginalisation and isolation had encouraged in-built sect characteristics. It was Trotsky's revolutionary spirit and his commitment to the self-liberation of the working class that Cliff looked to. Cliff showed that it was possible to hold to the most principled revolutionary ideas while relating to the concrete struggles of workers.

This book contains a selection of writings on many of the events that he sought to understand and intervene in, from 1930s Palestine to the Indonesian revolution today.

From 1938 to '46 Cliff worked as a Trotskyist in Palestine. With the Middle East Peace Agreement in tatters, his view that the only solution for the revolutionary movement in the region lay with the Egyptian working class is as important today as it was then.

At the height of the Cold War, the revolutionary Marxist tradition was almost completely marginalised. The task was to maintain that tradition, not just as an academic exercise but

also as a contribution to the political arguments of the period. An example is Cliff's pamphlet on the Polish revolutionary Rosa Luxemburg (1959), which re-established her importance as a revolutionary. But it also demonstrated that despite her political mistakes, at the core of her politics, in contrast to the bureaucracy and dead hand of both Stalinism and social democracy, was the idea of Socialism as the self-emancipation of the working class.

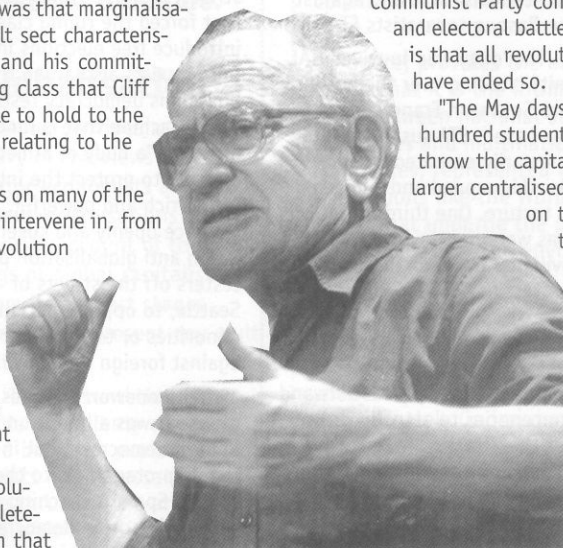
It was the huge struggles in the late sixties and early seventies that put the possibility of revolution back at the centre of politics. The late Dave Wiggery captured the mood perfectly, "It was as if an international pageant was being acted out- the ideas we had treasured in pamphlets and argued about in tiny pub rooms were now roaming alive, three dimensional Marxism had come out of the cold."

The reaction against the police repression of the student movement in May '68 in France was to lead to the biggest general strike in history. For over a month factories, offices and shops were occupied and closed. In every sphere the old ideas were contested. The state looked on powerlessly only to be saved by the reformist politics of the French Communist Party confining the struggle to a purely economic and electoral battle. The central political lesson drawn by Cliff is that all revolutions in history start spontaneously, none have ended so.

"The May days in Paris showed clearly that, while a few hundred students or workers can build a barricade, to overthrow the capitalist regime and seize state power a much larger centralised organisation is necessary." His pamphlet on the Portuguese revolution that overthrew the Caetano dictatorship in 1974 is another important contribution to that argument.

None of the pieces were written as detached commentary. They were written to explain, to arm and to move forward the socialists of the period. The specifics may have changed but a new generation of anti-capitalists will learn much from this collection.

Willie Cumming



IDEAS FOR A NEW WORLD

Globalize This! -

Edited by Kevin Danaher and Roger Burbach

-Common Courage Press

"The 21st Century did not begin on the first of January of the year 2000. The new century was born on November 30th 1999 with the revolt of the globalized in Seattle Washington." *Globalize This* strikes a confident note from the outset. This book describes the motivations and ambitions

of the globalized, of over 50,000 demonstrators who shut down the meeting of the World Trade Organisation, the demonstrators that were an inspiration to millions of people worldwide. Put bluntly in the book is the question, "how do we stop the biggest threat to democracy in our time?" The message is clear: in Seattle the WTO was stopped, and hopefully it can be stopped for good."

Globalize This features articles from many of the organisers and demonstrators at Seattle. From the introduction, titled "People Making History", the authors set out their stall. Ordinary people from trade

unionists to environmentalists made themselves heard in Seattle "on the tear gas shrouded streets of Seattle, the unruly forces of democracy collided with the elite world of trade policy. And when the meeting ended in failure the elitists had lost". Inspiring stuff.

The reader is given descriptions of the Seattle demonstration and other thoughts on the movement which it has triggered. This is compulsive reading. We hear reports from the organising meeting for the demonstration, the debates and training which took place, and of how the Seattle police attacked the demonstrations. We can also read about issues

that moved the demonstrators. More than any of this, the reader gets a sense of the hope embodied in such a movement.

The book also goes into the devastation that the WTO has done in a damning description of its origins, its policies, and its decisions. In the case against the WTO, there is a discussion as to whether the WTO can be reformed, how it has led to greater poverty and how capitalism is destroying our planet and poisoning the food we eat. It reads as an astounding indictment of capitalism and the free market

agenda and shows why so many diverse groups are uniting to fight a common enemy. If ever we needed to be reminded of the urgency and of the right of the fight against the WTO and global capitalism, *Globalize This* does this. The final section deals with the restructuring the global economy, what should be in place instead of the policies of the WTO and G8.



This is the least satisfying part of the book. There are very important discussions on the need for a Tobin tax on international currency speculation, legislation that would punish corporations that break environmental laws or working rights in Third World countries, in short for a more people rather than profit centred world. Nothing to disagree with in that, but questions do emerge that are unanswered.

William Greider, for example, looks to the American Congress to implement these changes, while stating the fact that governments world-wide are backing the neoliberal agenda.

On a plus, Danaher's own article on pressuring the World Bank is packed with ideas for local agitation against the WTO, great stuff.

The articles condemn the drive for profit in today's society, but the discussion is largely confined to the WTO rather than the system it governs for multinational profits.

The book is at its best when you get a sense of a movement that can shut down the WTO, a movement that won't give up. We hear of ways we can "throw some sand into the gears of Globalisation", but I have a feeling that the people protesting in Seattle and Genoa, and those in the Third World want to do more than that. That said this book is an inspiring and compelling look into the dynamic and debates of the anti capitalist movement. Recommended.

—Colm O Riain

BLOOD ON THEIR HANDS

Dirty War, Clean Hands, ETA GAL and Spanish Democracy'
Paddy Woodworth
Cork University Press

Dirty War, Clean Hands tells the story of the Spanish state's dirty war against the Basque nationalist group ETA. It sheds light on what happens to "due legal process" when politicians and generals think that their state is under threat.

In 1975, after forty years of Franco's brutal dictatorship and against a background of revolution in Portugal and mass strikes and demonstrations at home, Spain's rulers opted for the parliamentary system. Tens of thousands of workers took to the street to celebrate the 1982 landslide victory of Felipe Gonzalez's Labour Party (PSOE). In 1983 the PSOE unleashed the anti-terrorist unit GAL against the Basque separatists ETA.

The 'dirty war' involved GAL units crossing over the border into Southern France where ETA was based. ETA suspects were summarily executed, others were kidnapped and subjected to torture. One third of GAL victims were non-involved Basque civilians. Woodworth demonstrates that PSOE politicians were at the top of the GAL chain of command; next came senior police officers that recruited criminals, fascists and mercenaries to actually carry out the attacks. Many PSOE politicians and policemen were subsequently found guilty of a variety of offences.

But Woodworth's book is ultimately unsatisfactory and frustrating, as he marshals all the facts and then draws all the wrong conclusions. He cannot adequately explain why the GAL campaign happened, or why parliamentary politicians were at the centre of it.

The events described in his book are "in fact, quite unusual in other developed democracies." He looks at other Western countries but cannot find anything to compare with GAL. He generously accepts that allegations into collusion between the security forces and loyalist death squads in Northern Ireland "deserve further investigation". Woodworth has obviously never heard of Bloody Sunday. El Salvador, Vietnam, Algeria ring no bells for him. In

1969/70 the FBI murdered twenty members of the Black Panthers, the exact same number of ETA suspects murdered by GAL!

PSOE came to office in 1982 committed to changing the system from within. So it had to win the cooperation of the structures inherited from Franco. It had to prove to the army, police and big business that it could be trusted to defend the integrity of the Spanish State. What better way to do this than to launch a "dirty war" against ETA?

PSOE lost the 1996 general election. It was undermined by the GAL scandal and had spent its time in office attacking welfare and driving down wages.

The Marxist tradition has always understood the necessity of fighting for democratic rights like trial by jury. It was the workers movement, not ETA, that formed the backbone of resistance to Franco. It was mass demonstrations and strikes, and not armed struggle that forced the ruling class to introduce free elections in 1977. But Marxists also argue that bourgeois democracy rests on a state machine that is fundamentally "a body of armed men" existing to protect the interests of the rich and powerful. It uses violence openly and covertly, to baton anti globalisation protesters off the streets of Seattle, to oppress national minorities or to wage war against foreign rivals.

Yet Woodworth argues, "The dirty war was a blight on Spain's democracy, but in bringing its protagonists to the courts, Spain is teaching the world a lesson in democratic practice". From this we might conclude that the protagonists have suffered the same fate as ETA activists who ended up before Spanish courts. Not so. Ten of the twelve convicted of GAL activities were granted 'partial pardons'.

Two of the most senior PSOE politicians, Interior Minister Jose Barrionuevo and Secretary of State for Security Rafael Vera, who both got ten years for ordering a kidnapping had their sentences reduced by two thirds, and the rest of it was suspended. They were released from prison!

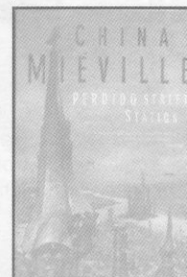
So much for 'equality before the law' and 'due process'. Read Woodworth's book but draw your own conclusions.

—Sean McVeigh

BRAVE NEW WORLD

Perdido Street Station
China Mieville
PAN

On the 2nd of May last China Mieville, the Socialist Alliance candidate for Regents Park and Kensington in the British General election, was arrested leading a protest of local parents against the closure of a nursery. He was released a



couple of hours later after a protest outside the police station by those same parents supported by local councillors and activists.

As in life he refuses to accept the erosion of community life by New Labour, in his art he rejects the imaginative straitjackets of genre or period writing. In the tradition of Phillip K Dick, JG Ballard and Iain M Banks his novels traverse the boundaries between fantasy and science fiction, fairy stories and social realism, modernism and mediaeval tales of metamorphosis and dark apocalypse.

Perdido Street Station is Mieville's second novel after 1998's *King Rat* and has established his place in the front rank of contemporary Non Genre authors.

The novel is set in the city of New Crobuzon, a decaying metropolis inhabited by an array of species and races that are watched over by the huge guard towers of the vicious city militia. Among those peddling their wares on New Crobuzon's smog filled, rodent infested streets are humans and humanoids, communistic flying Cymeks, Khepri spit-sculptors, striking Vodyanoi water-carvers and the grotesque remades, criminals and politicians who have been transformed into machines by torturous metal grafting. Strange and ancient religious cults vie for the hearts and minds of New Crobuzon's desperate and downtrodden.

New Crobuzon is ruled by Mayor Rudgutters Fat Sun party.

Their power rests on malevolent networks of corruption and exploitation, on the manipulation of public opinion through mass media and the seeding of divisions between the cities' workers and poor. The Fat Sun Party counts among its allies the many limbed many headed drug baron Motley, university scientists who do the governments cruel experimental dirty work, a giant cross-dimensional spider obsessed with scissors and snipping, and the truly freaky and scari-fying Ambassador of Hell.

But New Crobuzon also contains a thriving artistic and political underground from which Mieville draws his protagonists. Isaac is a maverick scientist whose experiments in arcane techniques lead him to unwittingly unleash a power that threatens to annihilate the city's entire population. His taboo love affair with the insectoid artist Lin, a fellow transgressor who has turned her back on the isolated and aloof world of her fellow Khepri, is one of the many interesting sub themes Mieville pursues in the novel. Isaac's allies in their quest to prevent New Crobuzon's destruction and evade death at the hands of the government and crime lords alike include Derkham, a member of a group of revolutionaries who risk life and limb to produce and distribute the newspaper 'Runagate Rampant', Yagharek a brooding Cymek who has had his wings removed by his tribe for the crime of selfishness, and Lemuel Pigeon, a charming underworld fixer whose connections enable the hunted gang to prolong their survival.

It is impossible to do justice to the imaginative depth and span of the weird, and disturbing universe created by Mieville. No matter how far distant New Crobuzon seems from our world we can recognise in its rotting social structure, in the betrayals and lies of its rulers, and in the degradation and heroism of its extraordinary, ordinary inhabitants the dilemmas of our own time.

Dave Lordan

No Nonsense no lies

The No-Nonsense Guides

- Globalisation,
- Fair Trade,
- Climate Change

Verso (Various Authors)

Aptly timed to coincide with Europe's 'summer of resistance', with mass protests due to take place in Genoa and Strasbourg, these three guides contextualise and analyse three 'hot topics' of anti-capitalism. Their preference for fact over waffle make the guides a welcome addition to the growing body of anti-capitalist literature.

Globalisation

Ellwood provides a clear summary of the views held by major economists and economic organisations and a concise account of the workings of global capitalism, from its earliest stages through to present day multinationals.

The presentation is excellent, with plenty of charts and box-outs explaining points not necessarily part of the thrust of the argument, but which considerably help the understanding of the text (such as a history of the gold standard or even the explanation of where the phrase "third-world" came from).

Sometimes Ellwood presents his own views as fact.

Such is the case with his pushing of a Keynesian economic model of price controls and protected industries—effectively the taming of capitalism through legislation—to make equitable distribution possible.

But the fact that these policies were the orthodoxy of the Post-war world prevented neither deepening recession nor the continuing robbery and misuse of the world's resources by the super-rich. As has been recognised by

anti-capitalists the world over only militant grassroots solutions offer any hope of halting globalisation in its tracks.

Climate Change

Godrej presents the facts about climate change resulting from the wastefulness of global industrialisation.

He shows with startling clarity instances of how our world is changing; floods in Mozambique, forest fires in the American Northwest and the appearance of once vanquished diseases in the developed world. Godrej cuts through the spin with which governments seek to confuse the issues and shows how supposedly scientific studies can be made to return any conclusion, no matter how false.

Godrej provides the evidence that it is the intimate links between national state structures and multinational companies, represented in institutions like the World Bank, that underlie the present impasse on the environment.

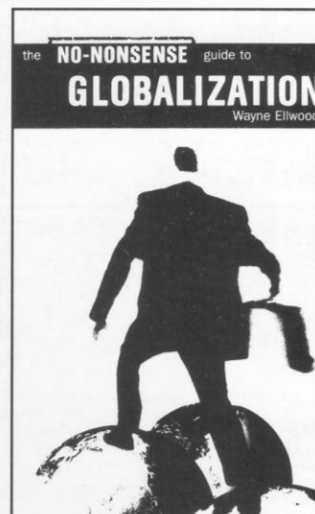
Our future survival depends on the spread of renewable energy sources like wind and solar power. Unfortunately Godrej doesn't see that ordinary people will have to break the power of the multinationals and challenge the power of the various institutions that provide legislative cover for their laying waste to the planet to make this spread happen.

Fair Trade

Ransom presents the realities behind modern trading using stories and interviews with people he met while researching the book, whether banana plantation workers in Guatemala or union organisers in Ghana.

The book is well-researched with plenty of statistics and diagrams.

Like the other guides *Fair Trade* can be contradictory in places. Ransom suggests that much of the damage attrib-



uted to organisations like the WTO and the World Bank is due to their fundamental misunderstanding of the matters at hand, and that their motives are often benevolent. However, John McMurty in the title on Globalisation proves that their motives are clear-cut, and that they have full knowledge of the consequences of their actions.

Anita Roddick, owner of the successful Body Shop introduces Ransom's book. She came under criticism in Naomi Klein's *No Logo* for some of the practices used in her business, the culture of which was described by Klein as "a cross between fraternity house, religious cult and sanitarium".

Ransom rightly extols the virtues of fair trade produce.

However, contemporary capitalism centralises economic power in the hands of an ever decreasing number of huge multinationals who will use their enormous political leverage to ensure that Fair Trade Producers have minimal impact on the direction of world trade.

Despite sometimes contradictory positions and the weakness of the proposed alternatives, these three concise guides provide a useful armoury of facts, figures and arguments for use in the fight against capitalism

—Rob Hurson

A funny thing happened on the way to the summit

Charlie McCreevy sat trapped in his hotel in Gothenburg, late for an important meeting. He was supposed to be explaining to his fellow European leaders how exactly he had managed to let the Irish people vote against the Nice Treaty. On the ground below his window, protesters battled the police and the cops went for the Tiananmen Square option and started shooting. The Minister suffered a road to Damascus like change of view on the EU. McCreevy announced, with as straight a face as possible, to an underwhelmed group of Swedish riot cops: that the Irish didn't suffer hundreds of years of British oppression to have the Europeans tell us to put our Corporation tax up. He said that it was good people voted no.

Ahern announced that what McCreevy actually said was it was good that people voted. McCreevy, insisted that he was "one of the most committed Europeans and not just in the financial sense". The other sense being that he knows where he lives.

What produced this confusion was that they had lost. The ranks of Official Ireland got a drubbing in the Nice referendum. Everybody was for a yes vote: big business, small business, the Catholic Church and all the political parties - Fine Gael getting overexcited by the prospect of a European army: Jim Mitchell says yes, yes YES. The Labour Party even declaring on posters that ☐ Socialists support Nice ☐, which presumably meant they had changed to a no position. And finally, there was the ICTU who managed to be to the right of every other trade union bureaucracy in Europe. The future non-executive directors are the only trade union congress in Europe for the Treaty. But remarkably people not only managed to ignore all the misinformation, and the fact Dana was against the treaty, and voted no. People voted to stop militarisation and to put some manners on the politicians.

At first after the result, we saw what politicians really think of democracy. In the minds of your average TD democracy is somewhat similar to taxes for rich people: generally to be avoided and if that proves impossible then at least to be kept to a minimum. "What do you mean they voted no, they can't vote no. They'll just have to do it again" was the response of all concerned. But then Eamonn O'Cuiv said he had voted no, and Fianna Fail started talking about respecting the will of the people. So, it turns out that the Government was in fact a model of balance during the referendum. Some of them were for it. Some of them were against it. Some just can't remember where they were on polling day and anyway it was a legitimate donation.

As an aside, during the referendum campaign the bastion of balance was, as always, the Irish Times. On the right (possibly even the far right) hand side of the page sat Kevin Myers

BACKCHAT



Announced McCreevy, with as straight a face as possible, to an underwhelmed group of Swedish riot cops: We didn't suffer hundreds of years of British oppression to have the Europeans tell us to put our Corporation tax up.

explaining that to make sure that republicans, greens and socialists didn't defile the memory of those Irishmen who fought in World War One we should all vote for Nice. On the far left (purely on the page you understand) sat Fintan "Bomb the Serbs" O'Toole, who explained

that if we really wanted to keep all those new coffee shops that make the Celtic Tiger what it is today, then we should vote yes. In the middle (both politically and on the page) sat careful and considered editorials that said vote yes, on the grounds that, well, because everybody else is saying so.

Now there is a perception that the differences in the Government are all clever spin. Fianna Fail being cute and populist. Now it is true they have a tendency to do this. For instance while trying to privatise everything that they can't cut the funding of, they are quick to claim, "It was the PDs what made us do it." Similarly Bertie Ahern proves he isn't a racist by missing no opportunity to have his picture taken with black children, while pushing through policies to deport their parents. The ability of the plain brown envelope party to talk out both sides of their mouth should never be underestimated. But they are less competent than people often think. Any party that puts Brian Cowen in charge of diplomacy is obviously in crisis.

There are genuine arguments among our rulers about the EU. One bunch argue, "Look America is where it is at, untrammelled free market, no public services worth speaking of, and workers' standing of living falling even faster than a partnership agreement can manage. Whereas in Europe they have strong unions, social welfare, hell they even have public transport systems. Anyway all our money comes from US multinationals so we don't need Europe so much." The other lot argue "The American economy is banjaxed we need the support of the EU to keep going. If we just attack everything outright then even the ICTU will notice. We need to do this by stealth, with lots of talk about inclusion and pluralism. Anyway are the US multinationals going to subsidise the ranchers?"

The one thing they have in common is contempt for us. The difference between whether they are for Boston or Berlin is purely about which they think will make the most profits for them and their class.

In response, we should look to Seattle and Genoa, and indeed the protesters and trade unionists of Boston and Berlin. The No vote was a good start, but let's hope the next time Charlie McCreevy is near a riot people aim the rocks with more care.

—SIMON BASKETTER